ONCE IN A LIFETIME TREE

tudent Writings from the Montana Arts Council Artists in Schools/Communities Program, 1986-87

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Writers serving in the schools, 1986-87:

B.J. Buckley
Patricia Henley
Ripley Hugo
Albert Masarik
David Romtvedt
Michael Riley
Pamela Uschuk

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For information about this book or the program, contact:
Julia A. Cook, Director of Artists Services
Artists in Schools/Communities
Montana Arts Council
48 North Last Chance Gulch
New York Block
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 443-4338

This book was compiled by:
Michael Riley, co-editor
B.J. Buckley, co-editor

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Once in a Lifetime Tree

Writings by students participating in the 1986-87 Montana Arts Council Artists in Schools/Communities Program

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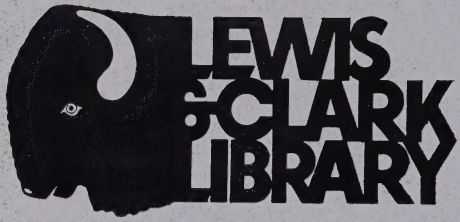

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FOREWORD

Maybe the recent deaths in my circle of friends and family have me looking at these writings in terms of mortality. Maybe the students across Montana wrote about death, transformation and irreplaceable moments more than they have in previous years. Or maybe they see mortality as straightforwardly as a road shot through their open country. Maybe it's western light, or maybe I'm just getting old and sentimental, but I see much of this writing as an expression of a one time hit, an urgent calling to do whatever I'm doing as fully as I can, because whatever that is, it only happens once.

Most likely, I'll see the book differently in a few months or years, but it's fascinating and quite substantial for me now to notice the range of emotion and viewpoint concerning mortality here. There is fear of death, guilt, emptiness and pain, and there is resignation, humor, understanding and hope. But through it all runs a current of fresh immediacy, so I'm hearing again and again, "Enjoy it! It only happens once!" I'm talking about how Megan Simmons would have me eat an orange, how Kristie Triemstra would have me laugh when I hear a duck quack, how Doug Mills warns me about a mule's eye, and how Sarah Vowell jostles me through Coltrane's saxophone. I'll eat other oranges, hear more ducks, see different mules and feel new blues, but never those again.

So this is a valuable book to me. It reminds me that every moment is a "once in a lifetime tree", and that if these students had never written anything, we would only have our own perceptions of how they "climbed, spun and danced away on the wind." They do so quickly.

My hope is you will enjoy their writing and support it. Many teachers will use this book to keep the cycle going, and to them we owe our thanks for letting our students write. We never know what we'll write until we write it, just as we'll never know what they might leave us until we give them the chance. ▲

Mike Riley
Co-editor

PENCILS

are the first letters of school.
They start books and poems and dinosaurs. Long and brown and skinny like branches, like a toothpick, like a piece of steel, like a ruler that measures words.

THE PENCIL

May 30, 9997

Dear Diary,

I don't have much of a life left. Renee has worked me down to a stub. I can't believe it! First, I was a big, tall proud pencil. Now I'm a short guy. Oh, no! I'm one centimeter and Renee's going to shar.....

· Holly Frydenlund, Meadowlark School, Shelby

CALENDAR

my calendar skips around like
a frog leaping from pad
to pad

the dates fly by like
birds

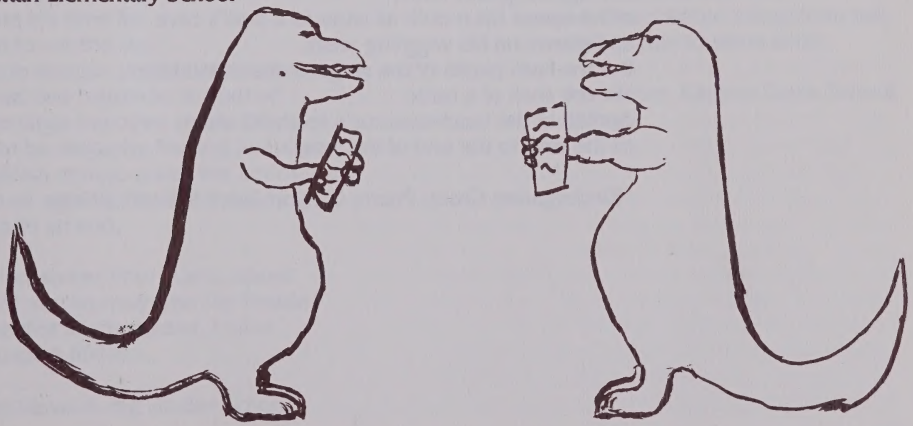
the years are like a
turtle walking in thick mud.

· Shandra Erickson,
Graff Elementary School, Laurel

TYRANNOSAURUS REX

I am the Tyrannosaurus Rex.
My teeth are as long as
machetes.
I am King
of the tyrant beasts
with claws like daggers
and eyes like moons
wrapped in tinfoil.
When I walk, the earth
trembles like
an earthquake.
Things crumble
like old bread before me.
I am the
strongest.

· Cyrus Gillett,
Manhattan Elementary School



✔ · Rusty Sharp, Browning Middle School

DINOSAUR POEM

I love dinosaurs!
They lived before everyone else did in the world,
where warm rain fell down like wet red sun
on the long, fat, oval, bumpy heads
of brontosauruses and triceratopses.
The dinosaurs lived in houses made of water,
in slimy, muddy swamps and lava lakes.

When a tyrannosaurus got as hungry as 5 or 6 alligators,
he would find a spiky-tailed stegosaurus and try to eat him,
because a stegosaurus is fat and juicy and tastes like candy.
The stegosaurus does not want to be lunch
for this monstrous tyrannosaurus,
so he runs right over the top of him
and bops him on the nose and plays drums on his head.
The tyrannosaurus gets as angry as thunder
and lightning and wind,
so he opens his mouth as wide as a bear's cave
and chews on his wiggling steak.
But the hard plates of the stegosaurus shield him
like the shell of a turtle
And all of the tyrannosaurus's teeth fall out
all the way to the end of the story.

· Kindergarten Group Poem, Canyon Creek School, Billings

TEASE TEASE TEASE

My brother teases
Dumbly he calls me leaning
tower of pisa

· Lisa Pribyl, Cascade School

EMBARRASSMENT

Like a little mouse who made a mistake.
It is like somebody painted my face bright red as a beet.
The tight little thoughts stuck in my head:
"People hate me now,
I made a mistake."
So I turned away
and ran home.

· Rebekah, Anderson School, Bozeman

TWO HAYSTACKS

I am sitting in a
field and it's time for
the sun to set the sky,
shades in orange, yellow, and red,
there are two haystacks in front of
me one large the other small, they
seem to be elegantly floating just above
the reddish orange grass, the atmosphere
is calm all around the day is slowly
coming to an end.

And I remember how I came about
this field and its man who sits beside
me, we met at the market, I have
now made a friend.

· Renee Stewart, Big Timber School

HAIKU

Colorful leaves fall from
trees like children falling from tall
monkey bars towards earth.

· Abe Zeiler, Canyon Creek School,
Billings

The coin went up. First my mind went blank and my eyes went into a half blur; then I remembered my Grandpa teaching me how to play the great game of chess. He beat me every time; but now I was even above him, higher than everyone, except the other three. My opponent called heads, it seemed like hours before it came down. When it did it was tails. I moved my pawn so my queen could move. He moved his queen. He's dumber than I thought. I could sacrifice my bishop for his queen. Again my mind went back to my Grandpa when I killed his queen, he had won, but I am smarter now. I killed his queen, but he killed my pawn, not very smart because I quickly killed his rook. My mind kept going blank; how could I win this game or even the championship blanking out like this?

First I started killing his pieces, then he killed my queen. I started fighting back. Next thing I knew he was beating me. Finally I had three queens and a rook. He only had his king. I had won, if I stayed smart. This was an easy win, many times I had won this way, again I blanked out. Then my mind went back to the game, I put my queens on different lines and bingo, CHECKMATE! Next stop the Championship.

The next game was with the champion, if he won I was doomed. The game was short, but not very sweet for me. The champion won as usual and now he was going on 15 years of straight wins.

When I got back to the hotel, my mind was full. I got a VCR and all the tapes on the championship games. But when the tape went on my eyes seemed to go blank, my ears didn't hear anything, I couldn't feel anything. My mind was asking me what I was doing in London, and what I did to get here. My mind was flashing, my heart was beating faster. There was a knock at the door. I couldn't get up; my feet wouldn't move. By the time I got up they had left. When the movies were over I tried to go to sleep. But I kept tossing and turning. I fell asleep about 11:00 p.m.; and I was dreaming about my past, present, and future. My dream was all mixed up. I was playing against my Grandpa and my opponent in the Championship. They were arguing and punching, I was sleeping, my Grandma was cooking over their heads because of all their steam. My Mom was cleaning everything. Ah! I woke up. It was 12:00 a.m. I thought I would never go back to sleep. Finally I fell to sleep. I dreamed the champion was winning and I shot him and he shot me. Then my mind went blank. It seemed like hours passed before I could get my dream back. Then I was up in space playing chess with a dog; my dreams were screwing my brain up. All of a sudden

a really white bright light flashed. I was in London playing chess and winning when he killed all my men. I was crying and hitting; the police took me to jail and I played chess, and played, and played, and beat everyone. Then I broke out and went to the championships again.

I woke up in a terrible sweat and a terrible fright. It was 7 o'clock in the morning. I got out my portable chess game and played it, and beat it in 5 moves easily. I sent for room service, it got to my room fast. I then wrote in my journal for about 20 minutes. I rested my brain and read about chess. I watched TV, read more, and I talked about chess to my Grandpa. I could tell he was crying; I was crying, and my gut felt horrible. My eyes watered and my hands were trembling. I called my Mom and Dad. They were crying too. I felt like dying.

As I walked out of the hotel I was greeted by ten American fans, who were excited because I was the first American to get into the chess finals. It was a great experience for me and my family. But I was on the downside of the odds. From the officials the odds were 90-10 in favor of the other guys, and that was not good for me. I got into the limo and we were off. Just then the phone in the limo rang, my opponent was sick. I felt sick myself. The limo went to the hospital and I went in. When I heard he had the flu I was sick. My head spun and everything went blank. The next thing I knew I was on a hospital bed with a virus, and they wouldn't let me go. They said the virus would get loose, but I knew I had to get out. "Mr. Squires, telephone, it's the Board of the Chess Championship." "Hello, Michael you have to play chess tomorrow, sneak out of the hospital tomorrow, O.K." "O.K., Bye." But how was I supposed to break out of a hospital?

The nurse came in and put me to sleep. All of a sudden I was chained to the bed and they were torturing me. I couldn't get to the chess game. I was dying, they were electrocuting me, and asking me how to win at chess. I could not move, they taped my mouth shut. I was screaming like crazy, just screaming. They stuck a huge pin in me.

I woke up in a sweat. It was 12 o'clock, I got dressed, and was down the hall. I had an idea, I went to my room and got a vase. This would be a waste, this vase could get me over one hundred thousand dollars in cash, a trip home first class. I had to get through and now. So I went up the hall, and with a mighty throw I threw the vase down the hall opposite to the door. It took only a few seconds to make a sound. It sounded just like a window cracking. The guard made a dash for the door full blast. When I made it to the hotel they

wouldn't let me in. I hoped they would let me in without my I.D. card. They decided to.

As soon as I went to sleep, I was dreaming again, this one was the wildest of them all. "Move out the pawns." I yelled, "Move out the knights", "Kill his queen." BOOM! CRASH! "My queens died, no checkmate." I woke up, finally it was time for my game. "Let the games begin," the referee said. The clock went by one hour, two hours. It's two games to two, he kept moving into my traps, soon we were down to only a few pieces, finally I could get him into checkmate in one move, but my hand wouldn't move, it seemed to be glued to the table. Finally I moved it, CHECK MATE! I had won. Ten million dollars, and a free trip home.

When I got home I had ten million dollars and a good life. Soon I got married and had a great life teaching kids how to play the wonderful game of chess!

· Michael Squires, Fort Benton School

CONVERSATION WITH A ROCK

You think I'm ugly
as an old man,
grumpy, bald,
no place to go,
a bag man carrying
brown dirt,
protozoans,
worms, eggs of ants.

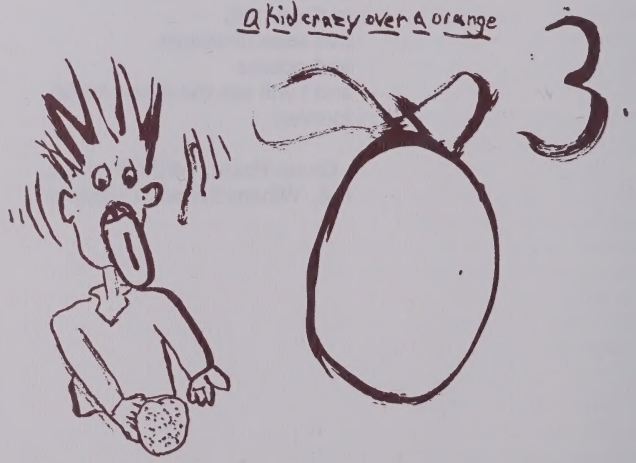
But I'm as beautiful
as modern art,
formless,
stunned with color —
orange lichen,
moss green as jade or fern —
and I have all the time
in the world,
I've seen dinosaurs
and oceans
and I will see the moon smile
forever.

· Group Poem, 1:00 6th grade,
B.A. Winans School, Livingston

ODE TO AN ORANGE

An orange
is sweet,
tangy.
Like a
gentle
massage
in
your
mouth
and
throat.
Its rind
is
deep
orange
with white.
Plump,
juicy,
round like a
never ending
circle.
I can't stop
admiring
an orange.
In sections
or
halves,
each with
a musty,
tangy,
juicy smell
like a cellar
with
canned foods
lining
the shelves.
I want
to
keep
an orange
forever,
to
admire
as if it
was
a favorite
pet.

· Megan Simmons,
Big Timber School



· Sam Solway, Browning Middle School

WEATHER

I have warm weather in my pocket.
The sun in my dark pocket lights it up.
You can build a fire that will burn grass.

I have cold foggy weather in my head.
It makes me dizzy, it makes me feel like my brains are ice cubes.
Snow is blowing around, it's windy.
It sounds like when you blow over the top of a pop bottle,
it whistles.

I have Fall weather in my mouth.
I'm eating yellow, green, orange, and
purple and red and black and grey leaves.
They taste like dirty rainbows.
I have a hoarse, silly voice, like a horse laughing.

I have spring weather in my eyes.
Rain comes out of my eyes and goes down to my shoes,
and they get all soggy and wet.
Tulips and roses and violets, lilies and buttercups,
bloom from my ears and out of my fingernails.
I look like a scarecrow bouquet.

I have a storm in my shoes.
A bug storm is biting me with purple green teeth.
A worm storm is crawling up my pants legs.
It's raining tigers and poodles.
Lightning is zig-zagged down my back,
just like putting nails in my back.

· Mrs. Litzsinger's 2nd Grade Monday Class, Arlee School

NO ATTENTION

"Twice I have had trouble with a teacher, Mom," said Sara as her mother was rattling pans.

"Sara, go talk to your dad," Mother replied.

"Daddy..."

"Sh! Darn it! Twenty bucks down the toilet," said her father as he was walking out the door.

"What happened, darling? Did they lose?"

"Yeah, by two points."

"Mom, I'm going to Rebecca's house."

"Is Rebecca home?"

"Yes, she is. Rebecca! Sara's here!"

"Ok, Mom. I'll be right down! Hi, Sara. Let's go to my room."

"Rebecca, I wish I was in the other classroom because Mrs. Tessle won't let me do anything."

"What did you do now?"

"I hit Willy because I was mad at Mrs. Tessle, and I was mad because he laughed at me."

"But why did you hit him? He's really a nice kid."

"I just wanted attention."

"But why do you do this?"

"Because I never get any attention."

"Mom," said Rebecca, "call the Pentons because they won't pay attention to Sara so they will understand that they have to pay attention."

"Okay, Rebecca."

"Hello, Mrs. Penton? I'll tell you a secret and you'll pay attention to Sara. Sara is going to have the measles."

"Are you feeling alright, Sara?" said Mrs. Penton.

"Yah, sure Mom. Why do you want to know?"

"What did you want to tell me about your teacher, Sara?"

"Oh, nothing."

· Chere Monroe, Fort Benton School

SECRET HIDEOUT

Scattered with cow bones
my secret hideout was
a hole in the ground.
This hole was about six
feet deep.
When I was little I'd sneak
off and go into my dark,
cozy hideout. It was
just like a pouch in
a mother kangaroo
where no one could
find it.
There I'd sit and
try to match all the bones
together.

· Terry Harrelson, Park Senior High School, Livingston

ODE TO MY TEDDY—

My teddy has fur like red cinnamon-sugar sprinkled on toast
with little black raisins on the toast for his eyes.
His favorite place to sit is on a pillow stuffed with vanilla pudding
where the sunlight drifting through the window like flour drifts from
your hand onto the floor can wake him up but he lies very still
until the house is empty, then he prowls around the house
and knocks over honey jars and the honey oozes out of them like a
flowing river, but then he whistles and mops muck in
like soldiers and clean up the mess.
When he hears a car coming, purring like a very large tiger looking
for its prey, he waddles at bumbling pace back to his
lumpy, squishy, soft, pudding filled pillow and goes back to sleep.

· Kristy Drye, Arlee School

SILENCE

One night I went into my room. My brother was talking in his sleep. He talks in his sleep every night. I listened to my brother for about 5 or 10 minutes. When I got sick of listening to him I tried to go to sleep. But most of the time I cannot because he keeps me up talking. Then he'll start singing "Mary has a little lamb." It makes me so angry I want to wring his neck.

The next night when I came home, he was talking about my dog. I said to myself, "He talks about the most boring things." I tried to go to sleep but he was pretending to be a dog and he was barking. So I got up, went down stairs and got some ear plugs.

The third night I came in, he was reciting his math problems. This time I couldn't take it anymore. I got out of my bed, walked over to his bed, woke him up and asked him, "Why do you talk in your sleep?"

He said, " I don't know", and he went back to sleep.

So I went over and turned on my lamp. I asked him again, "Why do you talk in your sleep?"

He said, " The last thing I talk about at night I can not get out of my mind. So I probably repeat it in my sleep."

So I told him I would give him 5 dollars if he would not say anything at night. The next thing I know he is talking about money. "Finance, accounts, silver, gold, treasure," he is saying.

· Toby Rogers, Washington School, Miles City

WINDOWS

A flag is a stained glass window, it's a prism
that spits out flowers, a nylon peekhole to neon birds,
to fiery red palm trees, to slithery snake grass.
Aluminum foil, if you look in it, your face is
bumpy like mountains, a terrible, mysterious reflection.
White light and gloomy air bounce back at your body.
Clothes are windows with zippers, you see Hawaiian underwear.
Shirts are windows that close with buttons,
they keep out bugs and the dangerous world.
Shoes are windows with shadow glass,
their tongues stick out and taste dust and mold spores and people.
Hearts and eyes are human windows, you can see
the blood and nerves, a tomato river and legs with terminal branches,
green, brown, blue, and red, —a pine tree, bark and pinecones,
feathers dangling, cold fire shoestrings.

· Mrs. Wining's 3rd Grade, Arlee School

THE TROUBLE WITH SHRINKS

I woke up one morning about 5 minutes till eight o'clock. I decided not to go to school. School is so boring anyway. So I got dressed still half way asleep. I went down to Circle K to just hang around. When I got there, I saw my mom walk in. I just about died! I just bet I looked like a ghost, my face was so white. The clerk must have thought that I was crazy when I hid under the counter and told her, "Shhh."

My mom picked up a coke and a candy bar. I thought she was supposed to be on a diet, the big pig. But I wasn't going to stop her.

When she walked out I thought 'saved'. Boy was I wrong.

I ran to my house as soon as I could. I opened the door. There were mom and dad on the

couch, sitting there watching T.V. The way dad looked at me I knew I was dead. He stood up. I knew what was going to happen. My stomach felt like ants and cockroaches were digging in at my sides. In amazement, he said, "What are you doing home from school already?" I said bravely, "I didn't go to school." I thought he was going to explode the way he stared at me. He said, "Jenny honey, why didn't you go to school?", in a firm voice.

"Because I didn't feel like it."

That set it off. He started yelling at me. His face was so red I thought he would pop. I felt my eyes start stinging and everything went blurry.

I yelled, "Stop it! I hate school. All I ever get are C's, D's and F's."

I ran in to my room. I never wanted to see anyone again. Mom came in and put her hand on my head. I turned around and said, "You came in here to scold me too." Mom said, "No, I know how it feels to just want to get away. But you shouldn't have skipped school."

I said, "Mom, I hate having two shrinks for parents. That's why I do dumb things to prove I'm not like you."

She said, "I'm sorry. But you're going to have to live with it. Also, young lady, you're going to write an apology to the teacher."

"Why?"

She said, "Because I said so."

"Some answer." I thought. But I sat down at the desk in my room and started to write the apology. I thought, "It's amazing how moms always make things better." I also thought to myself, "What am I going to do next to really get them mad?"

· Naomi Meis, Meadowlark School, Shelby

BEING SICK

When I'm sick
lying in bed
I feel like a
bug trapped
in a jar

My nose
is plugged forever
like the dark
and forever
winding
universe

The nights are
as long as a
train track
stretching
from coast
to coast

· Skyler Lashley,
Granville Stuart School, Deer Lodge

A FIGHT

Here I am sitting in the
future just
thinking about the past.
Something's on my mind;
a fight...
a stupid fight.
We had no reason to do so
But do so we did.
Three hits and you were down.
You gave up and walked away.
My friends said I was tough.
A month later I got my cast
off. It's the future
and arthritis has set in.
I can barely move my hand.
My knuckle has rivets and
wires to hold it in place.
As I think about it, tough
isn't written on my face.

· David Kern, Bozeman High School

MATHEMATICS

Numbers skip like rectangular
prisms. They dance and dangle
like stars in dark windows.
Roman numerals are an alphabet of clouds.

Add scissors and paper to equal half a butterfly.
Subtract cats from dragons to get fireflies,
Multiply gruff mountains by foggy cities,
Divide flashing melodies by Spanish harmonies,

And you'll have storms of skyscrapers,
Old men with rugged voices and dirty faces,
fluorescent neon lightning, matadors
and bulls black and red as thunder!

Measure the light in the bluebell sky.
Stretch clouds around the gloomy moon while it cries
wild stars and comets. Twist green jumpropes
around the belly of the sun, that ruby morning antelope!

Oh, sad schools, brown desks, ripped books
of figures, sums and problems, hooks
to catch our rainbow minds, go
to the edge of the ocean and drown.

Whales are waiting by the grassy sea
to lift us into algebra and geometry,
spiral shells, starfish with five purple arms,
round octopusses, pyramids of coral, alluring technical charms.

· Group Poem, 3rd/4th Grade, Cardwell School

Recess is like extra fun.
Extra fun is like a wildcat.
A wildcat is like rushing and playing.
Rushing and playing is like a wild horse.
A wild horse is like rushing to the door.
Rushing to the door is like recess.

· Josh Forsythe, Monforton School, Bozeman

SCIENTIST

I want to be a scientist.
Since I was five my dream
is to be a scientist.
That's why I'm writing this poem.
My dream was broken.
I am a . . . poet.

· Paul Bailey, Monforton School, Bozeman

I'M SAD

When I can't
write a poem
because my
mind is
out of
order
sorta.

· Darrall Hugelen, Monforton School, Bozeman

WHEN IT'S LUNCHTIME AT MONFORTON SCHOOL

everybody's chattering, rushing, shoving—
greedy to get to munchings and crunchings.

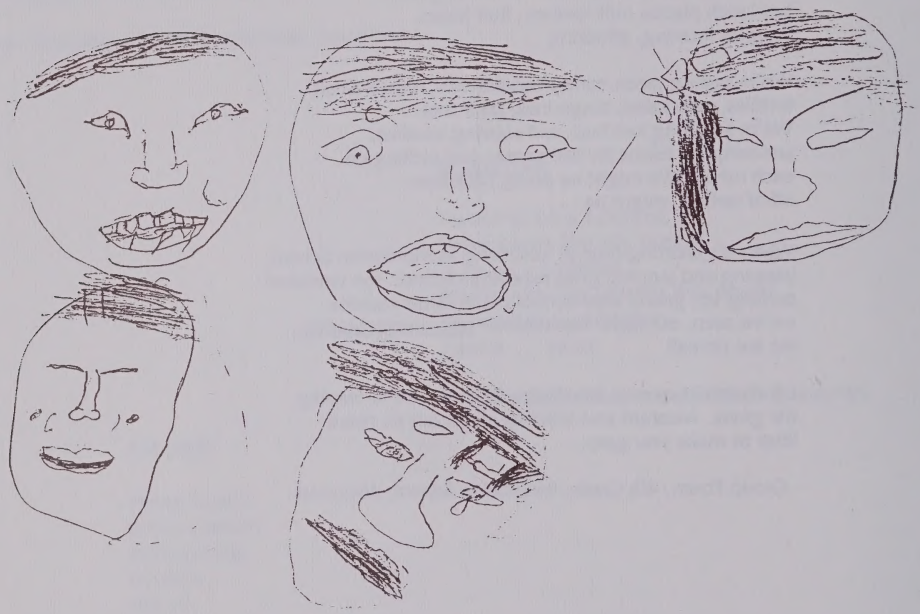
When it's time to pig out at Monforton School,
we're outside, spread out all over the grass—
hot lunch plates, milk cartons, fruit juices.
Baggies littering, glittering . . .

We're tasting tacos, turkey sandwiches, tossed salad,
tortillas, taco salad, tangerines, tater tots.
We're squirting ketchup, and stealing cookies,
choosing up teams for ball games and picking on
each other. We might be doing back flips
off of swings, might be . . .

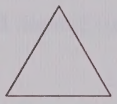
When it's chatting time at lunchtime at Monforton School,
yapping and japping goes on every second: the weekend
coming up, gnarly after-school plans, latest movies
we've seen, our latest inventions—nous avons bizarre ,
we are unreal!

Lunchtime is over at Monforton School. We're leaving
the grass. Mustard and ketchup stains but no more
litter to make you gasp.

· Group Poem, 4th Grade, Monforton School, Bozeman



· Billy Welch, Napi Elementary School, Browning ✔



TREE

is the first letter of autumn.
It's a letter of feathers redder than raspberries. A yellow-orange paper fire, crinkly and crackly. Like a sad painful bird that's lost its brown wings.

up a tree

up a tree
I see
some squirrels playing tag
they scurry up and down
like a busy elevator stopping
at every floor
birds sing love songs
to each other
cones sit and wait
and dream of when
they get to be as big
as their father

· Willy Maxwell, Granville Stuart School, Deer Lodge

THE CUE CAT

When my cat
walks
down
the street
she sniffs
the water
running
down the gutter

When she
climbs up the
prickly tree
she moans and meows
to the cue of her feet
scribbling up the tree.

· Becky Smith, Granville Stuart School, Deer Lodge

OVERWHELMED

A sweet piece of candy.
Fire crackers bursting inside.
Your desire to strive, win,
be first at all,
knowing you will succeed.
Your heart will burst.
Being so sure that all will go
all right. An orange
finally falling free
from the tree.
The pieces of the puzzle
finally falling together.
Everything is exact,
true. You are overwhelmed.

· Cristen,
Anderson School, Bozeman

the wind howls like a coyote
through the old abandoned house
it squeals like a mouse
while it settles in the soft
moist ground
the ice cackles like an old witch
as the sun envelopes the pond
in its many arms

weeds peer out of the ground
looking to steal some of the sun's love
daisies laugh at the weeds
open their arms, and block the
sun's light

shutters sound as if
they are beating a rhythm to
some wild, chaotic tune
the wind through the naked tree
whistles a melody while
squirrels dance on the limbs.

· Roxanne Ulrickson,
Outlook High School

DUCKLINGS are cute and fuzzy. The Mommy Duck is very protective cause she doesn't want anything to happen to them. The Daddy Duck hunts for food too, 'cause they get very hungry and they have to go to sleep just like people.

· Sam Reinier, Monforton School, Bozeman

SPIT ON THE WORLD

Jerry cashed his smallest bill, a fifty, into pesos and walked out of the hotel to get something to eat. Finally he got the attention of a waiter and clumsily communicated he wanted a coke and some nachos. He sat alone and ate, thinking about the way everybody sugarcoated his life back home. What the hell did they know? Did they get to see their father more than an hour a day, and when they did, were they afraid to talk to him? Were they an orphan of the team for at least six months a year? Did they worry when their Dads lost a game that they'd be moving again?

Jerry knew his mom made him come on this vacation to ease the tension around the house before the Regionals in Salt Lake. By coming, he thought, I've left my team, and as much as I disliked dad during the season, I still didn't want to disappoint him and I was doing that, too. He thinks the individual is nothing. The team is everything. I believe the exact opposite. I believe in the individual. He believes you live, die, think, work, and play for the team. I want to be me, not us, but somehow he always tells the team, "Good job," and I am one fifth of that team on a good day. Hell, I am named after Dad's favorite player.

Jerry finished his coke and nachos and walked over to the veranda. He looked at a guy parasailing. He decided to give it a try and maybe if he got lucky he'd crash and die.

On his way over to buy a ticket to ride he thought he'd buy a necklace for Melissa, his current girlfriend. She seemed to care, but she also sugarcoated his life. He talked the man selling it down to thirty-five bucks. The man said it was solid silver. Jerry walked away and glanced at the pendant briefly. "Made in Taiwan," was all it said. In anger he looked for the vendor, but he had disappeared down the beach. He pulled out the money and gave it to the man, wondering what the chances of a terrible accident were.

Finally, he strapped himself into the parachute. He got instructions from the beach bum running the show and got ready. Then he heard, "Pick up your feet, pick up your feet," and was up. He soared through the air with such ease. Looking down onto the resorts and palm trees, he felt good. He was soaring, and alone. He leaned over a little bit, and spit and watched it fall. He said out loud for only God to hear, "World, Sir, this one's for me, for all the crap you've thrown my way." He suddenly felt a bizarre, somewhat strange sense of greatness, of happiness. From thirty stories he had spit on the world and it felt so good!

From that point he changed a few things. He signed a pact in spit for himself. A pact that said it was OK to live for himself. That's what he had to do. Only it had taken him this long to figure it out. He was no longer one-fifth of a person.

· Chaot Hazelbaker, Granville Stuart School, Deer Lodge

GRANDPA

The way he tells you orders you feel
like you're in the Army
He has a look that may be soft
as spring breezes
or sharp as a bayonet
Grandpa is tall and lean like
a weathered tree
that isn't ready to go yet
His hands are coarse like a rough stone
He can be kind and gentle or stern
and mean like a piece of two-sided paper
that could turn over any time

· Josh Botnen, Lockwood Jr. High School, Billings

MY AUNT'S HOUSE

Up in the attic where me and
my cousin were at play
there was a shotgun. My cousin
picked it up.
All of sudden there was a bang.
It sounded like the world
was caving in.
My cousin was dead, his face
blown to pieces.
I felt bad because I was in
the same room with him.
I'll never forgive myself, because
it seems like it was my fault.

· Terry West,
Park Senior High School, Livingston

DUCKS

are silly, I hope you know. They quack and quack!!
They do funny things too, I hope you know. If you don't
like them, you don't have to. So you should laugh if they
do their funny things!! like quack! I like ducks. You
should know they quack for a long time! I hope you know.
I wish ducks could talk to me and I'm not kidding!! No, I'm
not no no no no I'm not!!!!!

· Kristie Triemstra, Monforton School, Bozeman

BEAUTICIAN

Left-over soup with the orange oil drifting on
top sits upon the stove.

An infant's eerie cry
echoes through the thin plaster walls.
Ragged pink slippers scuff around the corner.
The sound of "The Batman and Robin Show"
drifts into the bedroom,
a man sprawls in a tangle of
unwashed sheets.
3 young children quietly move through the house,
like mice avoiding the
cat.
The sun kills the darkness and traps the shadows
in the early morning heat.
No air-conditioning, no telephone,
Only "The Batman and Robin Show."
And she thought she'd be a
beautician.

· Alycia Nathe, Outlook High School

WOMAN IRONING
(THREE HAIKU)

Traveling through France
I see a woman washing
on a large white cloud.

Her hair is tousled
the work is almost finished
like rain falling slowly.

Bent over quite sadly
ironing, she looks like hills
trapped in the new spring.

· Josh B. Edward,
Canyon Creek School,
Billings

· Renee Butterfly
Browning Middle School

MY SISTER ANN

It all happened so suddenly. She was just another three-year-old child, and then she woke up retarded.

My parents took it harder than me, though. Mom took her to the hospital to see what was wrong. Ann had some tests and the doctor told them what happened. I didn't hear what he said. In a slight way, I was glad it happened in the summer. That way I didn't have to take all the stress and still keep my A's.

Mom told me not to worry about it, because in the end, everything would turn out fine.

I took the advice, and after that it seemed like she wasn't really handicapped at all. In fact, when my best friend, Jessica, asked me to go shopping with her, I decided to take Ann with us.

When we met in front of the shopping mall Jessica said in a disappointed voice, "Oh, Lila, you brought Ann." Quickly, I said, "Oh yeah, she won't cause any trouble."

We went in the flower shop first, just to look around. Then we heard the store manager shout. Jessica cried, "Lila, look!" I turned around to see the store manager shaking Ann, his hands gripped tightly on her shoulders.

I ran toward her and grabbed Ann by the wrist. The store manager bellowed, "Does she belong to you?" He didn't let me answer. Ann was crying. "You better keep an eye on her. Your mother should leave her with someone who's more responsible. Look what she's done."

I turned around. A rose was on the floor. A shattered vase and rich soil surrounded it. She must have tried to pick the rose, and then the store manager's shout startled her, causing her to tip the pot over.

"That's a nine dollar damage!" the store manager shouted. By now a crowd had joined around us. One lady said, "The poor thing. She didn't know any better, you can tell."

"We have some money. Did you say nine?" I pulled the 10 dollar bill out of my pocket that I had brought for a new bathing suit. "I need some change."

The store manager reached for the bill. "Never mind. Just be sure she doesn't do that again." Jessica was probably thinking, "I'll never go anywhere with her again."

△ △ △

A lot of things went like that. Finally I put my mind to teaching her. She was 4 years old now, and mom wasn't going to send her to school.

It wasn't easy teaching somebody who was scared of all my friends because she thought everybody was like the store manager.

I taught her the ABC's, which went alright. I taught her how to say her name and other words, too. I tried to teach her that my friends weren't going to hurt her, which wasn't easy.

I showed her pictures of some of my friends. "This is Ellen, she's really funny. And this is Beth, she's really smart. This is Jessica. You know her. Don't be afraid of these people."

"Okay!" Ann said with a smile.

I had a feeling it was going to work, so I got all my friends that I showed her at my house, to try it out.

Mom baked chocolate chip cookies. We were all outside. "I'll go get my sister." I said. I brought Ann out. She saw everybody's smiling faces, and ran back inside, crying.

"Sorry," I said. "Thanks for coming." I went inside.

Mom was sitting down. "How did it go?" She asked.

"Horrible! Where's Ann?" I asked.

"In her room, under the bed."

"Don't worry." She said in a comforting voice. "You've done a super job teaching her. It'll just take her awhile."

Mom gave me that speech over and over again. I tried so many times teaching her my friends wouldn't hurt her, until the day finally arrived.

Ann was playing outside. Jessica came over to play. "Oh no," I thought. "I hope Ann doesn't see her." She did.

Quickly I took Jessica's hand, went over to Ann and said, "Jessica won't hurt you, Ann."

Much to my amazement, Ann stepped forward, took Jessica's hand and said, "I know. None of your friends will."

· Amy Smedsrud, Meadowlark School, Shelby

THE NORTHERN PIKE

lurking in shallow weed beds
the Northern waits for its prey
like an alligator in a duck pond

a frantically kicking grasshopper
falls from a high cattail

the Northern
noticing ripples in the water
uses all ten pounds of muscle
and the grasshopper vanishes
in a tidal wave of force

like a yacht full of people
in the Bermuda Triangle.

· Michael Nathe, Outlook School

PLANTS

They think about dirt, how it's like a bearskin carpet
to their stringy toes, how it makes them feel secure,
squeezed and packed like a straight jacket, in windy weather.
In the pelting rain, they gulp crystals, wet
and cold as an icebox. The wind squeaks and sings like a clarinet
and the plants dance a wavy ballet, a classic opera of nature.
Buttercups and violets and daisies, geraniums and white roses pure
as silk sunshine, stretch and open into leafy petalled planets.

Meanwhile, in ditches, in fields, along the roadside, weeds
plot evil, to rebel against the showoff flowers. Dandelions
with spiky yellow manes hunt and prowl, tear lawns apart
rip green victims with vicious teeth. Knapweed, and its rotten thorny seeds
puncture innocent buds with daggers. Bramblebush is dyeing
defenseless eidelweiss in trapped colors, strangling bluebells with its dangerous art.

· Group Poem, 4th Grade, Thompson Falls School

THE RAIN FOREST

In the wet, moist, green damp places
by the long black overflowing river
that inches slow as a tortoise, faces
of cheetahs leer and growl and quiver
at parrots hollering in the banana trees.
Anacondas, living copper vines,
drop like diamond arrows. Zebra bees
buzz in fierce striped deadly lines.

· Group Poem,
Mrs. Wining's Third Grade, Arlee School

EVIL EYES

Dad was at the U Bar U Guest Ranch, owned by Les Hammond. He was to shoe a few head of pack stock for Les. But as usual, Les was not around. Dad was pretty mad now, cussing at Les under his breath and telling himself he would charge that little rotten check bouncing bastard an extra $10 a head. Dad really wouldn't do that because he is too nice of a guy, but he was seriously considering it.

Les didn't show at all, so Dad asked Buddy, Les's hired hand, what stock he was supposed to shoe. Buddy had no personality at all. You would get more conversation out of talking to a wooden post. And he was about as smart as one. But he was able to catch a mule, a black mule, that was about fifteen hands high and probably weighed 1000 pounds. The mule had a snakey look in his eyes, a look that I had never seen before. His eyes were satanic.

Dad was getting ready to pick up the left front foot and the mule was acting a little goosey, but it appeared to be alright. Dad had had trouble with the mule before. He had put ropes on him the first time he shod him. Once he had the front foot between his legs, he picked up the knife to clean away the dirt and horse shit that had built up in the hoof, and he dug the knife deep into both sides of the frog to check for any rocks that might cause a bruise.

Then Dad took the nippers with long handles so he could get the leverage to cut the hoof. He started cutting the hard black hoof on the left outside heel and worked his way down to the toe and back up the inside of the hoof, trying to make it as smooth as possible...that way he didn't have to rasp much. He took a couple licks with the rasp at the heel, but left it higher than the toe to keep the mule from walking on his heels. Dad then took a couple more licks around the outside of both heels to take the flare away. Then he picked up a double-ought shoe and placed it on the mule's black hard hoof. He gave the hoof a long look and moved it around a little to decide how to shape it. Then he dropped the mule's foot slowly and carefully, so not to scare the mule and get him all stirred up. Dad walked over to the anvil to shape the shoe. The mule had a crooked hoof, so Dad bent the toe by placing the new shoe on the horn of the anvil and hitting the end of the shoe. He had done this so many times that he had worn a smooth groove about a quarter of an inch deep in the hard steel.

Dad had shaped shoes often enough that he usually only looked at the hoof once and it locked in his mind like a nursery rhyme or a love song. Dad picked up his tools and carefully moved to the rear leg. He used a hook to pick up the rear back foot, because he liked his face and didn't trust the snakey-eyed black mule.

The mule watched Dad from the corner of a coal black, evil eye. Dad hooked the mule's back hoof, pulled the leg toward his crotch, set the hoof above his knees, and dropped the hook. Now he was where he wanted to be and he started cleaning the hoof. The mule was looking for opportunity, like a rhino studying a hunter or a buffalo staring maliciously at the wolf.

The mule shifted his eyes forward and made a hard, quick jerk with the back leg Dad was holding, using all the strength he had to throw Dad under him, the worst place he could be! Then the mule lifted his front leg and tried smashing Dad's skull, but he only drove Dad's head into the gravel, breaking his nose and cutting his face up. Dad found the strength to move out from under him, but the mule wasn't through yet. He spun and knocked Dad into the anvil, breaking three of Dad's ribs and knocking the wind out of him. Dad slowly fell beside the anvil, not moving at all, and the mule looked at him, the eyes never changing. Dad pulled himself up, loaded his tools into the pickup, closed the door, and started for home.

The mule looked at Dad one more time, and his eyes were the Devil's. I could see the hatred inside them. Looking into the mule's eyes for that one instant, it was actually as if I were looking into the eyes of Satan himself. And even as the madness died, the mule realized he was not finished and the coal black wicked eyes were back, as if they had never left.

· Doug Mills, Augusta High School

THE BLACK KNIGHT

I was in the year 1203. I was in a big black castle and my friend John wanted to be a king. I was a black Knight. I had to fight my friend. He was scared to fight and so was I. We both lost the fight and were hurt. There was a moat around the castle. In the fight we both fell in the moat. After six years my friend became a king. I was the best guard he had. We fought in the war of the White Roses and the Red. I was shot with an arrow but we won the war. I was now king because my friend got killed. I didn't want him to die, but wanted to be king too. I lived for 74 years. Between these years there were no wars. I wanted to die by a war. I was old and I tried to start a war with my brother but he was too kind. Finally I did start a war with my brother. I killed his best guard, he then killed me. My great-grandson was going to get my brother back.

· Kelson Ramey, Basin School

THE HUNTER

The forest seems to fall apart
Two dark shadows come trotting out of the aspens
He thought to himself shoot, shoot.
Then the forest was quiet.

· Jeff Kirby, Laurel High School

Federico García Lorca (Spanish)
Arbole, Arbole...

Arbolé, arbolé,
seco y verdé.

La niña del bello rostro
está cogiendo aceituna.
El viento, galán de torres,
la prende por la cintura.
pasaron cuarto jinetes
sobre jacas andaluzas,

con trajes de azul y verde,
con largas capas oscuras.
"Vente a Córdoba, muchacha."
La niña no los esucha.
Pasaron tres torerillos
delgaditos de cintura,
con trajes color naranja
y espadas de plata antigua.
"Vente a Sevilla, muchacha."
La niña no los escucha.
Cuando la tarde se puso
morada, con lux difusa,
pasó un joven que llevaba
rosas y mirtos de luna.
"Venter a Granada, muchacha."
Y la niña no lo escucha.
La niña del bello rostro
sigue cogiendo aceituna,
con el brazo gris del viento
ceñid por la cintura.
Arbolé, arbolé.
Seco y verdé.

Arbole, Arbole by
Federico García Lorca
"Translation" from the Spanish

Come, come.
Hear my story.

Of nine cats strong silly
but wise as ever.
One night, all went out,
of food for all were poor.
Alley leader of them
had gone in search of food.

He went seeking through the night.
his large eyes sparkled along.
"Must find Food, he said."
Of nine no loses shall we make.
Alley treaded fear of all
different cats type color and size
small and very fat ones made afraid he.
"Must find Food, he said."
Of nine no losses shall we make.
Must go where eye lay not ever,
cat said to himself,
pass under garden gate shall I along
the roses, and marigolds by lilies.
"Must go to Grandpa", he said.
And of nine no losses shall we make.
Of nine cats strong silly
but wise as ever.
He asked for food very much for poor cats.
Come, come.
Hear my story.

· Janelle Jacobson, Granville Stuart School, Deer Lodge

LITTLE THINGS ARE BIG THINGS

Old car radio, AM
Started me off on the road to music.
Now I own a stereo,
But I don't forget.

Half a block of willows that I used to play in
Helped me deal with life.
Now I am free of the Jailer,
and I don't need bushes if I want to hide.
But I don't forget.

· Wanda Mus, Bozeman High School

MY RABBIT

Two gray lumps playing in green.
Our dog breaks loose
and two red lumps
laying in the green.

· Damon Orestad, Monforton School, Bozeman

I LOVE ducks. They are pretty and you must not say bad things about them. Ducks have feelings too. Ducks make mistakes.

· Raelynn Ward, Monforton School, Bozeman

MOUNTAIN

is the first letter of high winter.
Boulder giant rocks tumble in snowy avalanches,
a crash, a rumble, a freaky echo.

· Kimberly Marceau, Browning Middle School

Thunder is like an ax
flying through
the air

· Nathan Farnam,
Anderson School, Bozeman

Rain is like bullets.
Fog is like being blind.
Moonlight is like a flashlight,
in the dark. Ice is like a blanket
for water.

· Jared Collings,
Anderson School, Bozeman

Softly softly flows
The water over the rock
And makes the moon ring.

· Mandy Rosdahl, Thompson Falls School

WILDERNESS SOUNDS

Hear the wind blowing
Sound of elks bugling at night
Birds sleep, trees rattle

· Travis N. Rushton,
Cascade School

The Arrow

They say
The bone
remembers
The rock hammer

and the
spear and
everything it
went into.

They also say
it remembers
the blood.

The little arrow
Had been in so much
Blood that you
wouldn't believe
that it's white

It's shape
is just like
a miniature tree
with little chips
here and there.

It remembers
The soil I found
it in.

It remembers the
screaming voices
and hopes never again
to kill someone.

· Terri Sue Berry, Big Timber School

· Shawn Skunkcap
Browning Middle School

THE HUNT

ACT I, SCENE I

NAR: Four men going hunting in the mountains.

Slick: (Excitedly) This is going to be a great time without any women bossing us around or to spend our money.

Nick: (Happily) Yeah, I'm glad we thought of it.

NAR: At camp: time – 5:30 P.M.

Rick: (Hungrily) Where's the food?

Mick: (Angrily) In the camper, stupid!

Rick: (Smartly) Oh, my foot.

Mick: (Confused) What about it?

Rick: (Angrily) Nothing!

Mick: (Loudly) I'll get it, idiot.

Slick: (Madly) Shut up, idiots. I'm trying to get some sleep for we have a long day ahead of us.

Nick: (Angrily) Yeah, I spent the whole day driving here.

ACT II, SCENE I

NAR: All of the guys were snoring loudly. And an elk is in their camp. And the elk bugles.

Rick: (Tiredly) Guys, be quiet.

Mick: (Excitedly) Hey, guys, it's an elk.

NAR: The guys get out their guns and start to shoot at the elk.

Slick: (Excitedly) I got him!

Nick: (Excitedly) No, I got him!

NAR: There the elk lies dead with 50 holes in him. And it is a 7 point. Then they dress him out and hang it in the tree.

Rick: (Happily) Let's go back to the creek to get the blood off our hands.

NAR: A bear enters their camp and takes their elk.

All of them: (Madly) Our meat is gone.

NAR: The bear kills them.

ACT III, SCENE I HUNTER HEAVEN

Hunters in white camouflage with halos and uzis.

All of them: Now we can hunt all of the elk we want, and no women or bears.

· Sean Kochel, Tracy Kiefer, Bobby Gardipee, Jesse Fey, Meadowlark School, Shelby

a morning's
frost in the
middle of
December
a train's harmonica
on the hard
icy track

in
the early spring
the loud
harping of millions
of birds
making the day
start
out
Right.

· Jenay Hunt, Graff Elementary School, Laurel

CROSS FIRE

It's the grandest of feelings riding across the green mountain meadows and knowing that you're the only human around for miles in any direction. It makes it much grander if you know that at the end of that trail will be the prettiest girl you ever laid eyes on, waitin' for you.

That's just what I was thinkin' until I realized of a sudden that I wasn't all alone on this mountain. It come to me as a surprise, but when that bullet took the horn cap off my saddle, I started understandin' right quick. I lit a shuck for the brush and didn't waste no time in hittin' the dirt when I got there. When I peeked up to see who it was that was shootin' at me, I was lookin' right into the eyes of a mighty displeased rattlesnake.

It seemed I was in a real sticky predicament. Here I was in the middle of nowhere, with some crazy fool up on the hill yonder trying to blow my head off, whilst I was trying to stare down an unblinking rattlesnake. And I was keepin' my girl waitin'.

The good Lord must have knowed I was in trouble 'cause the next shot that idiot took nailed that good old fanged friend of mine. My good luck didn't last very long though, 'cause when I turned around it was right into the barrel of a six shooter.

"Goin' somewheres Mister?" says the fellow behind that gun.

"As a matter of fact, I was," I says. "I was headin' to the settlements to see my girl, but some nice gent up on the hill musta mistaken me for a deer."

"I knew what you were," he said. "That was just a warning to stay away from Kris Benton. She's to be my girl."

"I suppose that's up to her, Pard," I says.

"When I'm done with you she ain't even goin' to know who you are."

Then he holstered his gun and came at me. He smacked me a hard one right in the head. My knothead absorbed the blow without hardly feeling it, but the force of it knocked me on my can. Lucky for me his momentum from throwing the punch made him trip over me and get knocked cold from hitting his head on a rock.

After I fetched the horses and hog-tied him, he came to enough so I could boost him into the saddle. "Let's hurry up and get to town," I says, "Maria's waitin'."

"Maria?" he says.

"Yeah." I smiled "Who is this Kris Benton anyhow?"

· Tucker Mills, Augusta High School

**TODAY I WAS SO SCARED,
SO I MADE THIS POEM**

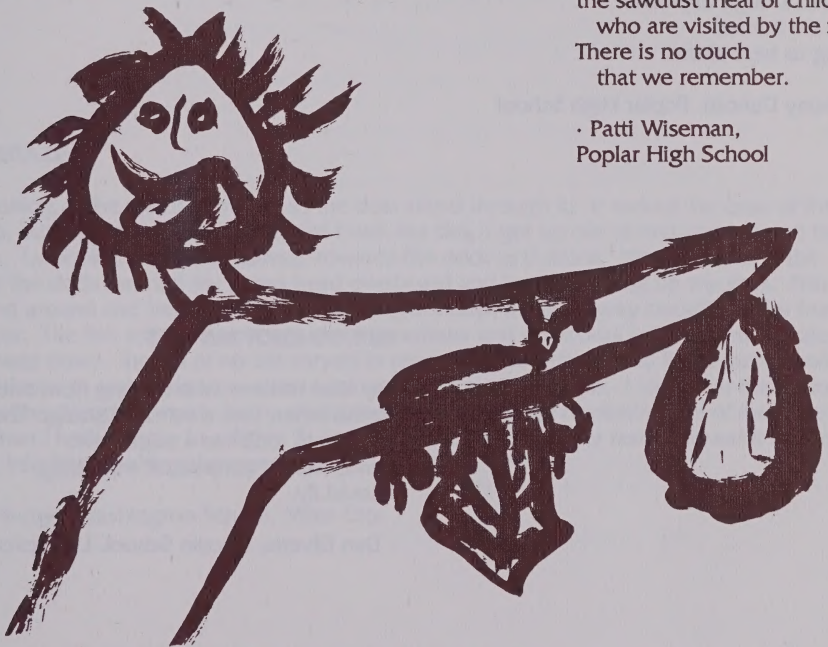
A murder, a scream, running away,
tripping, falling, scratching up your
face; everything dying, everyone
missing, being forgetful.
Skiing down a steep mountain.
Then a storm crying.

· Ellie Oberly, Big Timber School

ANGER

a close cousin of hate
who has power
over the mind,
steaming hot like
burning charcoal drowned
with water.
In my ears, the ringing
of all sounds
I don't want to hear:
the sawdust meal of children
who are visited by the fist.
There is no touch
that we remember.

· Patti Wiseman,
Poplar High School



· Dana Croff, Napi Elementary School, Browning

ALCOHOLIC

You told us to live life on the edge
  without caring if tomorrow we were dead.
You told us to shout at authority
  while you were convicted of manslaughter
    by the majority.
You told us to fight for our rights
  while you were killing yourself in the night.
Now you're playing with fire
  white lines get you higher
and with a huge explosion
  you are burned
leaving us here alone.

· Anthony Duncan, Poplar High School

ODE TO IDIOT MITTENS

My idiot mittens with a string from one
to the other. Like a starched string. They
made you look like a scarecrow.
It was like if I jumped off a building
I could fly.

· Dan Divens, Lincoln School, Livingston

The lake looked cold and forbidding
as if battling its own aquatic demons.
The water was still and had no expression.
The thin layer of slime covered the things
that lurked deep within the murky
waters, as a blanket covers a body.
The absence of light upon the water
made it look as dark as a liquid pool
of blood.

· Becky Cremer, Sweetgrass County High School, Big Timber

LIGHT GRAZING

The brushing of the water hummed as the boat sliced through it. It rocked the crew of five to sleep, but I lay in bed awake because I was sea sick. I got up out of bed and entered the hallway. I wobbled down the hallway towards the deck as if drunk. When I reached the edge of the deck I leaned my green head overboard and began spitting up my guts. Fish swarmed around and began eating it. With a giant leap, a bluish, gray swordfish flew from the water. The fish snapped up the last of my outbust and dove back into the green water. On his way down, the flip of his tail carved in my mustache a tiny sword like a razor shaving my whiskers. In awe, I slowly walked backwards, back to my cabin, I looked in the mirror and saw the design he made in my mustache. This was a sign reminding me of the knife I used when I knifed a guy in a fight. In astonishment, I grabbed my razor, shaved it off, and slipped into bed awaiting the next day.

· Todd Benge, Washington School, Miles City

SNOWY OWL

bird of death
on a graceful
wing
sharp yellow eyes piercing
the night
flying like a graceful
ghost in a snow storm
pretty and keen when the sun shines
the owl, bird of night

· Elias Voldberg, Big Timber School

DEPARTING

It is like putting a wall between two objects.
It is like leaving a country, a home,
or a special place.
We were like dead weeds and grass.
Our clothes torn, our faces ripped.
It is like two dogs, one dead and one suffering.
It's called leaving something.
The dark sky is grumbling.
The dead weed and grass blowing in the wind.
The blue mountains sagging like bums.
The black dark night with no stars.

· Bryce Olson, Big Timber School

OLD BO

Worn and tired he sits in his chair
under the light reading the paper,
looking like a philosopher pondering a new idea.
Eighty-one years have been his witness
to times of change.

With each passing year, his family closes in
like coyotes waiting for the buffalo bull
to fall, caring only for their share,
forgetting his contribution,
nipping one another.

Each time I drive past I say
I'll stop next time
just like the gambler who says "one last hand,"
but each time I stop
my fear he is gone increases.

The handshake, the pat on the back,
the hours of talk,
even when he is gone, they'll remain,
never forgotten, always referred to
like the ancient Winchester
over the doorway,
another relic of a day gone
of times that were slow to change.

· Mike Dailey, Park Senior High School, Livingston

THE LAST PORTAGE

Even though it was early June, there was frost on the ground on the morning of the last day. Paul awoke early, as usual. He left his brother asleep in the tent, and for a half hour, Paul did nothing but gaze at the lake, the trees, and the rising sun. It was his time, his place.

Paul had breakfast on by the time David awoke. At the sight of his brother, Paul experienced a twinge of pain. The illness was progressing rapidly, and slowly destroying David. He hadn't responded to treatment, and the doctors had given him six months to a year. Still, this trip had been good for David, who even managed a smile as he approached his brother.

"Thought you were going to sleep the whole day away," Paul said.

"No, not me. I like it too much here," David said.

"I know what you mean," Paul said.

"What's cooking?" David asked.

"Let's see, umm, pancakes, hash browns, some sweet rolls, and coffee."

David smiled. "No, not again!"

"Well, excuse me, next year you can plan the menu," Paul said. Damn, he thought, I forgot.

But his comment hadn't slipped by his brother. "Yeah, sure, next year I'll plan the menu," David mumbled.

"Sorry," Paul said.

"Hey, no problem, doesn't bother me anymore," David assured his brother. It did, though. It bothered him very much.

Changing the subject, Paul said, "Well, hurry up and finish, we have to get a move on."

"You bet, let's get moving," David said.

The boys packed quickly. They were very familiar with what had to be done, having come to Northern Minnesota for many years with their father. The man had died three years ago, but the boys carried on the tradition.

Paul was twenty, a junior in college, the older of the two boys. He was tall, well built, athletic, with dark brown hair and eyes. Even though he went away to college, he made a special trip every year to camp for a week with his brother. God, but he loved the trips.

David was two years the junior, just out of high school He was the All-American kid, blonde haired and blue eyed, excelled at everything, athletically and scholastically. Then the illness and David's world had turned upside down.

The trip gave them time to get reacquainted with one another. The weather, the fishing, and the company had been exceptional, and the brothers were in high spirits until they headed back to the real world, back to the problems they faced.

The remnants of the mist on the lake were rapidly dissipating in the early morning sunshine as the boys headed out. Paul and David paddled silently for a long time. All around them, Mother Nature put on a show. The sunshine warmed the air; a moose moved quietly along the shore; high above a hawk soared. The world was at peace.

"Say, Dave, what are you going to do after we get back home?" Paul asked.

"I don't know for sure, but I'm going to try to get out and about—you know, just see some country while I can still enjoy it," David replied.

"You think that's a good idea?" his brother asked.

"Look, the doctors haven't done a thing for me, Mom doesn't have that much put away, and I want to just do something... well, you know," David said.

"I guess so, but I'd just feel better if you'd fight a little more," Paul said.

"I've done nothing but fight for four years," David said. "Paul, I'm worn out, I'm too tired to do this anymore!"

"So you're going to quit, give up?" Paul asked. "What about me and mom?"

"Well, what about me?" David asked. "You think it's fun being the way I am? Well, believe me, it isn't, it's a real pain in the ass. The only reason I've done it for as long as I have is for you and mom—I want to do something for me for a change."

Paul thought for a moment. He could see his brother's point. He hadn't been the one who had to take the medicine, who had to be in the hospitals, who had to watch as his body betrayed him; it had been all David. Paul began to conceive of what his brother had been through.

Paul said quietly, "Are you sure it's what you want, even though it means you're going to...to die?"

"I've been dying for a long time," David said. "I'm not so sure it'll be all that bad, but I want to go my way, on my terms, do you understand?"

"I think so, but I don't want to lose you. I love you," Paul said.

"I love you, too, but please, see things from my viewpoint. I've been living for you and mom for a long time. I want to do some of my own living...and...dying."

The brothers' conversation died down as they spotted the landing to the one and only overland portage on their trip. They had selected their route carefully, in an effort to avoid straining David too much. Even so, this portage was not easy, and it was long—over three-quarters of a mile. Looking at his brother's thin, wasted shoulders, Paul experienced a fresh wave of worry.

"You sure you're up to this?" asked Paul.

"Yeah, sure. This is just a hop, skip, and a jump, right?" David answered.

"You got it, no problems," Paul said. He wasn't completely convinced.

The boys stepped out of the canoe. The cool water lapped around their ankles. Out on the lake, a loon called. His mate answered.

"God, I wish I could stay here forever," David mused.

"I know what you mean, " Paul answered. "Well, let's get going. Are you sure you're up to this?"

"Hey, don't worry about me. You just make sure you get across, okay?" David said.

"Sure, okay, all right," Paul said, as he pulled the light pack out of the canoe and held it up for his brother.

David shouldered the pack and headed down the trail. Paul shouldered his own pack, and swinging the canoe up, followed his brother.

Paul watched his brother closely. Although the pack only weighed forty or fifty pounds, David's legs wobbled and threatened to collapse. He breathing was ragged, loud. Even though he was obviously hurting, he kept on going.

Paul's own body was beginning to ache under the weight of both pack and canoe, and he could only imagine what David was going through.

David was in agony. The pack was threatening to crush him. "I won't give him the satisfaction," David thought, "I'll make this if it kills me." So determined was he that David forgot to watch the ground. He slipped on a root and fell heavily to this knees.

Paul dropped the canoe and rushed to his brother. "Are you all right?", he asked.

"Sure, just let me rest for a minute," David answered.

Paul was scared. This was the type of trail David and he used to race over. The portage was exhausting his brother, and exhausting him terribly.

"Look, you just rest here, I'll be right back," Paul said.

"I'll make it, give me a minute," David gasped.

"I'll be right back," Paul said.

He headed down the trail. On the other side, he put down his load and returned to his brother.

David was staggering drunkenly down the trail. His face was bright under a thin veil of sweat. His eyes were glazed and unseeing, and he nearly ran into Paul. His breathing, unbelievably, was even worse that it had been before.

Paul took the pack off his brother and led him to the edge of the lake. He wet his bandana and sponged David's face. David managed a weak smile as he looked up at his brother.

"See, I told you I'd make it, no problem."

The full effect of the illness on his brother was suddenly evident to Paul. David was dying. Paul finally understood what David had been talking about.

"I understand now, I'll help you talk to mom." Paul said.

"Thanks, you have no idea how big a help that is." David said.

"Yeah, sure." Paul said. He didn't want to be "a big help."

They were coming to the end of the trip. The last landing was in sight. Paul was deep in thought, trying to conceive of life without David.

"Hey, look at that would you!" David yelled.

Paul looked. An eagle was sitting on a fallen tree, scarcely fifteen feet from the canoe. David was snapping pictures as fast as he could. Paul just looked. After a while, the bird tired of being photographed, spread his wings, and took off across the lake.

"God, was he beautiful!" David said with a big smile.

"Wasn't he though!" Paul agreed.

David grew serious. "You see, I couldn't see that"—he gestured at the eagle—"if I was in a hospital bed."

Paul did understand. "Okay, Dave, go chase your eagles, with my blessing."

"Thanks, I can tell you really mean that, and I do appreciate it more than you'll ever know," David said.

"I know, I really do," Paul said.

❄ ❄ ❄

At the airport before his flight back to school, they said their good-byes.

"Thanks for all your help," David said.

"You're sure it's what you want?" Paul asked.

"It's what I want," David answered.

"Okay, then, I'll miss you, you know."

"Me too, but we'll do it again next year, right?" David asked.

"You bet, you just let me know when," Paul said.

"I'll do that," David said.

They never did get back there, though. David died seven months later. Paul got a letter from him the day after he died.

Dear Paul,

I'm going fast now, but I want you to know, I have no regrets. I've enjoyed these last few months more than any other time in my life. I'm living (and dying) the way I want to, I want you to know that. I love you very, very much.

Always,
David

Paul looked out the window of his room, tears streaming down his face. Far off in the distance, an eagle flew. "I love you, David," Paul said softly.

· Rich Batterman, Dawson County High School, Glendive

is the first letter of atmosphere
dark as a zebra's stripes
black and purple as a night of wolves and panthers,
cold as an icy sea bird.
A floating letter, alone, as scared as a turtle in retreat in its shell.

Once I went to the dentist
and got space gas.
My head floated, it was as light as
clouds and balloons and dust,
my mind flew on slow feathers, on
a silk magic carpet,
it swam like a fish, it turned like
the moon on a journey far far
back into another dimension.

· Group Poem, 4th/5th Grade Class,
East Side School, Livingston

ENDLESS LIFE

Johnathan Baxter, William Smith, and Roman Coon were in the Space Shuttle "Journey" waiting for lift off.

"57, 56, 55, 54..." said command at Edwards Air Force Base.

People around the United States were very nervous. This was the first manned shuttle operation in 22 years, the last being the devastating accident that killed seven people in January of 1986.

"3, 2, 1, 0... and we have liftoff," said the command center. The exit of the shuttle through Earth's atmosphere was excellent. Journey orbited around Earth for 3 days and everything went according to plan until...

..."Captain Smith, Captain Smith, this is command in Houston, please acknowledge."

"This is Captain Smith, go ahead."

"I don't know how to tell you this captain, but the president has just launched most of our nuclear missiles in self-defense against Russia. The planet Earth will be totally demolished within 21 minutes. You can come back to Earth and die with your family and friends or head toward Alpha Centauri, our nearest star, and hopefully find a solar system with a life-sustaining planet."

The following are journals by Dr. Roman:

Feb. 13, 2008

Captain Smith told John and me about the situation on Earth. I was a bachelor and voted for Alpha Centauri. William was recently divorced from his third wife and he too voted for Alpha Centauri. Johnathan, on the other hand, had two kids and a wife. I could tell it was hard on him but in the end he too voted for Alpha Centauri. We didn't want to watch the Earth disintegrate, so we just took off right away.

Food will not be a problem as we can grow plants on board. Other nutrients will come from the vast amount of vitamins on board. We have enough fuel to propel us at warp drive and we will keep this speed with no friction to slow or stop us. The biggest problem will be water. If we ration, we can maybe last for 200 days.

Feb. 14, 2008

Tried to make contact with Earth. No reply. I am in charge of the radar and steerage. Will call this my regular duties. Played poker with John and William and played chess with William. John doesn't know how to play.

Feb. 15, 2008

Did regular duties. Played chess and poker.

Feb. 16, 2008

John thinks I am wasting paper doing this. He says that I should do it every couple of weeks

or when something important happens. I told him to screw off and mind his own business, but after awhile I realized that this was a good idea and apologized.

Apr. 3, 2008

John learned how to play chess by watching William and me.

May 16, 2008

Great excitement today. While checking radar, there was an object about 18 million miles away. Headed our shuttle toward it.

May 18, 2008

Came within 5 miles of the object. It is a ship! Roughly 1 mile long, 3/4 mile wide, and 1/2 mile tall. Looks deserted. Found a loading dock and docked our ship.

May 19, 2008

Entered the ship in our space suits. Atmosphere was satisfactory enough to allow us to take them off. Interior looks very old. No signs of life. Did find water. Brought enough water back to our shuttle to last for 3 years.

May 20, 2008

Left the massive ship. Drank some water that we brought back from our trip! Very refreshing. I feel like I'm 16 years old again. Started on our way to Alpha Centauri.

July 21, 2008

It seems that the water was some kind of "Fountain of Youth." Haven't eaten or drunk anything in 60 days! Going to stop writing until we reach Alpha Centauri.

Jan. 2, 2089

We all look the same as we did 70 years ago. Reached Alpha Centauri. Located a planet in

solar system. Going to investigate.

Jan. 3, 2089

Found life! They look very much like us but have only one eye in middle of their forehead instead of two. Very friendly beings. Their lifespan is 40 years.

Jan. 4, 2089

I think we will adjust to this lifestyle quite well.

June 28, 3070

The three of us are going to travel back to Earth. Life is very boring. We are getting pissed off!!! Tried to blow my head off. Regrew another head. Tied myself to a rock and jumped in the water. Was able to breathe underwater. We cannot die!

Dec. 24, 3132

Made it back to Earth. Civilization is flourishing. Every country is now under one ruler. The ruler is good to the people. Weapons are forbidden. Food is plentiful. There are no signs of Nuclear destruction. The three of us are moving to the mountains. Hopefully we will be able to die quickly...

· Doug Shanley, Dawson County High School, Glendive

LAST DREAM

It's very late at night, and I'm walking down a dark, gloomy street. The street is surrounded by trees, big trees. The branches of these trees look like the hands of an old man or woman, very thin and brittle. It's a really good evening and I like walking. It's snowing out and the big flakes fall heavily but slowly to the newly laid blanket of snow. The snow is falling, and the dimly lit street lights are shining on the new snow and the old twisted tree branches. It all seems so peaceful and calm, but there is also an eerie feeling about the street. Not something that scares you, but something that draws you deeper down the lonely old street.

I thought I was walking alone, but when I turned to my right there was a spirit walking with me. The spirit was walking in a long gown, a black gown, that covered his whole body. You couldn't see any part of him. He had a musty, moldy smell to him as if he had been someplace damp or wet for a long time.

We never said anything to each other; we just kept walking, neither saying anything to the other one. He meant no harm. He was like a friend I'd known my whole life. But then the spirit said, "Look into my eyes," in a deep, raspy voice. We stopped walking and we faced each other, and as he pulled the big hood away from his unknown face, I looked into his eyes. I never saw his face because then I was on a beach facing the sunset. The sky was incredible. The clouds in the sky were a bright red, and the red seemed to cover the calm, peaceful ocean. The sand was pure white like freshly fallen snow. I looked down both sides of the beach. On my right the white beach seemed never to end. On my left there was a big cliff and very steep. Then I turned around and saw Lynette. Our eyes met, and I never saw anything else, except her green eyes.

And when I woke up, I was saying, "Heaven."

· Doug Mills, Augusta High School

NIGHT PROWLER

Somewhere a clock strikes midnight.
There's a full moon in the sky.
You hear a dog bark in the distance.
You hear someone's baby cry.

A rat runs down the alley,
And a chill runs down your spine.
And someone walks across your grave,
And you wish the sun would shine.

'Cause no one's gonna warn you,
And no one's gonna yell attack.
And you won't feel the steel,
'Till it's hangin' out your back.

Chorus I'm your Night Prowler
I sleep in the day.
Night Prowler, get outta' my way.
Night Prowler, make a mess of you
And there's nothing, no there ain't nothing you can do

Too scared to turn the light out
'Cause there's something on your mind.
Was that a noise outside your window?
Watch that shadow on the blind.

As you lie there naked
Like a body in a tomb
Suspended animation
as I slip into your room.

Chorus

· Joel Knutsen
Bigfork High School

THE GRIZZLY BEAR

There was a bear
with big, very big green eyes
with big red teeth.
It looked like it had
a big meal
then it saw a deer on a cliff.
The grizzly bear was as brown as a brown crayon
and its claw was as sharp as an axe.
The fur is as soft as a feather.
Then he opened his mouth.
I went inside his mouth
and I felt his fangs
and when I felt his fangs, I cut my hand
so I went to his brain
and thought what he thought.

· Mike Draszt, Thompson Falls School

COBRA

I woke up one morning
I hissed at the rocks
I looked around
I saw sand, rocks and plants
I couldn't walk
I could only slither
I was red as red bricks
My hiss was loud as a car
when you step on the gas
My slither was loud
as a lion's roar
My eyes were green
as willow leaves
I woke up,
glad to be in my room

· KaBao Cha,
Lockwood Elementary School,
Billings

THE DANCER'S CIRCLE

Heat waves dance across red clay
Cold walls call to me

Dust is slowly gathering on all
That I hold precious

Moonlight plays with his hair

· Kim Clawson, Outlook High School

HAIKU

The leaves are blowing
The wind is howling like wolves
in the far distance

· Matt Borgmann, Thompson Falls School

HURRY UP AND WAIT

If ever you should see
a man tree, run,
go to the dog tree stump
and wait,
wait for the stump to burn
and turn,
turn to the hollow rock and wait,
wait for the rock to crumble,
crumble til it's rubble,
rubble that will move
then move to a mountain pond
and wait,
wait and ponder,
ponder the problems of waiting
and hurry up,
up to the mountain of the moon,
moon without a shadow
and wait,
wait for the shadow. Fall,
fall that will never come,
wait til it's time again
to run
and once, run then wait
and over again,
then wait,
wait for an eternity
til the time comes
again for another short
run,
then wait
and wait.

· Bennie Welton,
Bozeman High School

THE INVISIBLE WEAPON

People were shopping and bustling around,
Insects were crawling all over the ground.
Everyone living and laughing that day;
"But countries were planning," I heard someone say.

The President, listening and watching so close,
Wondered what would be better for most.
Then talking it over with his cabinet at last
The decision was made; it all seemed so fast.

The opponent was threatened, and we, the same.
It was like playing some thrilling game.
The battlegrounds flooded with soldiers and gear,
Each man pretending he had no fear.

Then all of a sudden, like a bolt of lightning,
While tension and fear o'er the earth were heightening,
There was a rumble; like an earthquake it roared.
Missiles were launched, breaking sound as they soared.

A flash was seen as bright as the sun.
It all happened fast; leaving no time to run.
People outside the city that day
Could see the flash so far away.

Some disappeared, who were close to the heat;
Nothing was left to be seen in the street.
Those who survived were filled with grief,
But their loneliness and fear were so very brief.

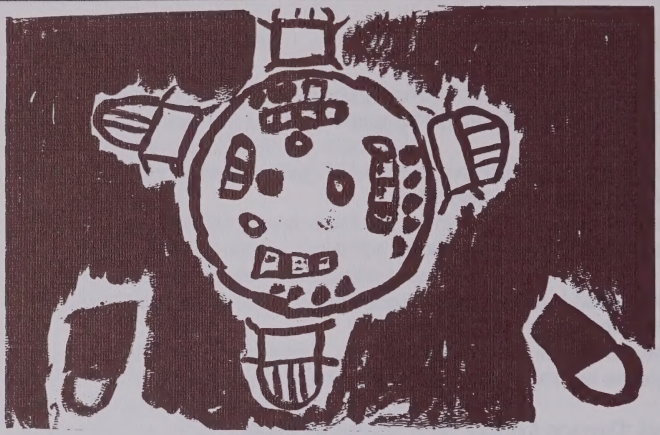
For, soon, they were ill and had nowhere to roam.
Their hair was so scarce, they had little to comb.
In search of food, survivors trod
Through lonely streets, praying to God.

Little food was left to be found.
Now, even the earth was fruitless ground.
People died one by one —
Mostly from sickness, but some, killed by gun.

No more people to rule the earth.
There's no more pain; not even from birth,
Filled with ash the air is cold.
The invisible weapon still lingers; so bold.

The price has been paid but the cost was too high.
It's too late to realize — and too late to cry.
The sky is so gray, and dark is the sun.
Can someone please tell me, "Who has won?!"

· Debbie Almond, Dawson County High School, Glendive



· Jim Nevins, Browning Middle School

PLAYING POKER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Bent stained cards
scattered
on the green table.
Poker chips stacked up,
an empire of red, white, and blue.
Gold beer
in glazed, chilled mugs
heavy as the silence.
Whiskey. Dutch Treat Cigars.
Dim, bluish light.
Cards in a paper arch in sweaty palms.
Four aces and the joker wild, that funny clown.
Ninty-eight dollars. Call. Royal Flush!
Bingo! Gotcha!

· Group Poem, 5th Grade, Cardwell School

THE BATHHOUSE

As I walk in for the first time
I am shocked
There in full view
Men, women, children
Naked
Bathing together
Somehow in time I get used to it
I mean
There're only two kinds of bodies.
I slowly remove my clothes
Hoping that no one will see me.
I creep into the steamtent
Through the fog I see many
faces ... young, old, in-between.
The gossip is as hot as the coals.
After getting a full-sweat I
walk out
Confident
My worries and reservations have
been cleaned away.

· Kim Clawson, Outlook High School

ANIMALS

A horse runs like apple wind.
At night he eats dark grass.
Wild animals, the stars, the moon, all
up in the sky, hide from the milk-shiny
mustang.

A fish jumps in the Atlantic Ocean.
At evening he swims in fire.
Sometimes he eats blue puppet worms
in a cave under the green bear sea.
A fish has a toy thumb.
He plays with it at lunchtime.

A kitten plays with a ball of black string.
He reels in the ball of string like a kite
flying on the cloudy floor.
He chases the string mouse
into a hole on the porch.
The kitten cuts a mole hole
and slides into spider webs.

· Group Poem, Kindergarten, Arlee School

LEAPIN' LASERS!

May 29, 4999

Dear Diary,

Today at the Laser Tag Academy I got zapped 5 times. Tomorrow is the championship. If I lose I'll be grounded for four light years! The grand prize is $1,000,000,000.

May 30, 4999

Dear Diary,

I won the championship. I'm taking all of us to Saturn for 2 weeks!

So long!

June 14, 4999

Dear Diary,

I'll never go to Saturn again! My sister is now a lunar lunatic in a mental hospital. Dad and mom are fighting a lot. I have Saturn pox.

· Sam Scheer, Meadowlark School, Shelby

THE MAD SCIENTIST

I, Dr. Mangle, am the maddest mad scientist in the world, because of something stealing all of my Mad magazines. It is driving me up the wall, down the wall, across the wall, etc. So I went to my lab and constructed a flashlight-gun. With it at my side I will terminate anything in this house that has one of my books! I called my friend Mad Max, and I told him to come over and join the hunt. He soon arrived. We started our hunt in the basement. No luck there. So we then proceeded up to the living room.

Max found a lot of shredded paper behind my master computer and a lot of tiny tracks that led into the wall. We then heard something running around upstairs. I ran up the stairs with Max right behind me . When we reached up the stairs, we saw nothing. We waited very quietly. Then something poked its nose out of a hole in the wall. Then it came out. We looked at it for a minute. We couldn't quite tell what it was. It looked like half rat and half bat somewhat. Well anyway I blew it to kingdom come. We thought we were rid of that problem, so we went downstairs to the living room.

We sat down, then turned on the T.V. The feature was "Poltergeist 2 1/2." When that got over, we decided to have dinner, mashed rat brains with swamp scum gravy and fried lizard lips, and don't forget desert frog toes fried in snake venom. Max had to leave after that. About 10 seconds after he left I heard that noise upstairs again. I ran outside and told Max to come back in here immediately.

I slowly started up the stairs, then Max after me. When we reached the top of the stairs something shut the door at the end of the hall. We ran down there, opened the door and we saw hundreds of those rats running for their holes. Max and I fired thousands of shots. I don't think we even hit one of those things, but we blew away the whole side of the house. Well, at least we hit something. And we did find what was left of my Mad Magazines. I was so mad and so broke I couldn't afford any more shells for our guns, so we had to move to Montana. We now live in a town known as Boulder.

· Seth Kremer, Boulder School

SONG

Chorus I can see it in your face
I can hear it in your voice
and no mater what I do,
I cannot get through
to you
to you

I can never seem to talk to you
the words stick in my throat
but it doesn't matter
I might as well be in a boat
a hundred miles away
because no matter what I do
I cannot get through
to you

Chorus

If life was as you see it
everything being as you saw it
I wouldn't be here at all
I just don't get it
Because no matter what I say
I cannot get through
to you

Chorus

The fire's burnin'
deep in my heart
But your icy looks
Get me down
Down
Down
Down
And there's nothing I can do
to get through
to you
to you
to you

· Russ Pichett,
Bigfork High School

WEIRD HAROLD

Weird Harold is a disturbed man.
He fights his unseen opponents
as if they were truly there.
Swinging fists.
Kicking.
Cussing.
Weird Harold is a disturbed man.
Sometimes he stands on the sidewalk
staring into space as if something
was really there.
But there is nothing.
Empty space.
Empty head.
He collects cans for a living.
He gets enough money for a jug
of cheap wine or a quart
of Budweiser.
I think he lives on it as if it
was food.
Liquid food.
Liquid death.
Weird Harold is a disturbed man.
His life is like that of a stray dog
always scavenging for food, for shelter.
Nowhere to go.
Nothing to do
but collect the tin cans.

· Reese Reddoor, Poplar High School

Arthur Rimbaud
(French, 1854-1891)

FLEURS

D'un gradin d'or, — parmi les cordons de soie, les gazes grises, les velous verts et les disques de cristal qui noircissent comme du bronze au soleil, — je vois la digitale s'ouvrir sur un tapis de filigranes d'argent, d'yeux et de chevelures.

Des pieces d'or jaune semees sur l'agate, des piliers d'acajou supportant un dome d'emeraudes, des bouquets de satin blanc et de fines verges de rubis entourent la rose d'eau.

Tels qu'un dieu aux enormes yeux bleus et aux formes de neige, la mer et le ciel attirent aux terrasses de marbre la foule des jeunes et fortes roses.

FLEURS by Arthur Rimbaud, "Translation" from the French

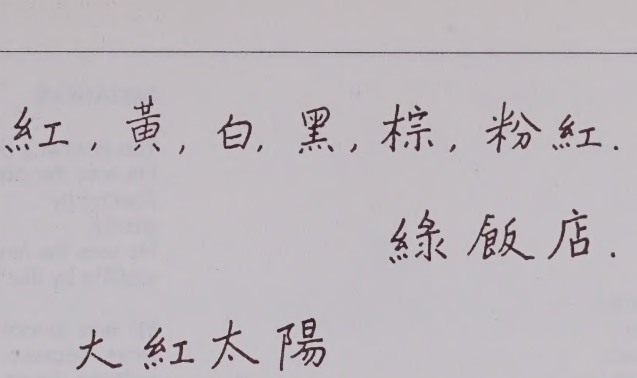
Open the door. Or I, less coordinated, will do so.
Lets get going unless volunteer vets eat less
dieting dishes, quite an astonishment, come do bring a salad, just violate all laws, digital souvenires? Sure, and tapes do file grains, do urge, do, yet eat the hors d'oeuvres.

Do, please do, or just seem sure, I'll gate desperate pilots that do acquire joyful, super, important, and are dump demanders, do bouquets and satin blankets drink fine beverages? Do rhubarbs entertain L.A. roses? Do they?

Tell us, quit denying us, enormous, yet blue E.T. transformers do never look more athletic or at retirement, ah, but today demands lots of full desirements just as geniuses and roses.

· Lorie Wagner, Cardwell School

Yuk Leung
(Chinese)



POEM BY YUK LEUNG, "Translation" from the Chinese

Across the field there is a fence
Behind the fence is just one
horse. Beyond the sky is a
boat
flying over the sea.

Or maybe its a bird
a flock of birds.
Crying
Chirping
singing.

Echoing through the water.

Man appears in water
picking up his weapon.

· Melissa Krinke, Lincoln School, Livingston

WAITING

I am a book
waiting
to be read.
I am
made of
poems
and rhymes.
I like to
be read.
I have
a special
poem called
WAITING.

· Sara Martin, Monforton School, Bozeman

I'm a wolf gray and wise.
I am not fierce and mean.
I help nature with the crippled and weak.
I'm a creature not a beast.
I'm peaceful and brave.
I come to the river where
the water is swift and rough,
the water's cold and clear.
When I go back to my den
it will be time to hunt so
I end my poem here, and remember,
I'm not a beast. I'm a creature.

· Mike Loterbauer, Monforton School, Bozeman

DISTANCES

This is what a boy in a car sees.
He sees the clouds
floating by
gently.
He sees the fence posts
zipping by like lightning.

He likes to look at the clouds
more, because
swifting clouds
are better than watching
thrashing posts go by.

Clouds make him feel
like a
floating bird, but a
fence post makes him feel
like roaring thunder.

· Jason Hegg, Monforton School, Bozeman

BICYCLES

are the first letters of wheels and tires,
the first letters of melting snow.
Careless, fast as a cheetah, pedals and balance like
a man on a high wire.

· Calvin Chief All Over
Napi Elementary School, Browning

DEAR ..... BIKE

you rattle
like
two cats
fighting
and
the
mud spots
make
you
look like a
cheetah
when you go down the street
you look
like
a silver panther running through
a
forest
but still
you
are an old
piece of
junk

· Trent Adams, Lincoln School, Livingston

DRIVING AROUND

I start in the morning,
about eight o'clock
I'm all alone the whole way
all alone the whole day.
I ride the road
with no place to go.
I just like to drive
I just want to know
what is out there
I have to know.
The freeway moves fast
and too busy for this boy.
I only use it as a last choice.
The two lane roads
That's what I like
They move so much slower
I can choose where I might
Stay for the night
And the rates seem to be lower.
I get a good rest
And I'm up the next morning
All alone the whole way
All alone the whole day.

· Richard Lee,
Dawson County High School,
Glendive

DEATH

I run down the road, gasping for breath, sweating. Behind me, the muted throb of an engine becomes imperceptibly louder. My pace quickens, my feet pounding on and on. The drone is definitely louder now. I glance across the barren plain around me, wishing for water. I turn around and then I see it. A gleaming silver dot on the horizon, a rolling cloud of dust like a demon spewing out from behind it. I stop and watch in horror as it nears me. It is almost upon me, and I find I can't move. It roars by. I cough as the dust hits me in a wave. The car turns around and purrs as it nears me. A window rolls down, a dark face is thrust out, teeth flashing at me. A rumbling voice comes out. "Want a ride?" I get in.

· Phil Hollenbach, E.F. Duvall Middle School, Deer Lodge

TURTLE

I move as slow as a grandma
coming home on the freeway.

I have a wonderful
body I can put my
head inside my
body.

I can
swim
down
under the water
and
get
my lunch or dinner

I look like a car on fins
my eyes like a tire on a
car
My head is like a balloon
it's green and fat

My shell is like a green
rock on a sun summer day.

· Jeff McQueary, Granville Stuart School, Deer Lodge

SATURDAY NIGHT

the boys walk with stylish clothes
and sun glasses
like private eyes looking for girls

the girls are as hyper as bees
around honey.

· Shane Walsted, Granville Stuart School, Deer Lodge

THE RAGGEDY CLOTHES MAN

The man in the green shirt and purple pants
torn in the back is smoking a brown cigar.
His pale face looks like ripped up paper.
He has shattered sunglasses, his fancy
smile cheers up women. When he dances,
he falls because he's old and far
out of orbit. At night he sleeps under stars,
he snores, he sleeps near garbage cans.

At night he dreams he'll be rich.
He wants a red Lamborghini bad enough to kill for.
He tosses and turns in his sleep, he talks,
he says, "I wish I were young again, I wish
I would see my old friends." He opens the door
and into the dark streets by tall buildings and sleepwalks.

· Mrs. Pitt's 4th Grade, Arlee School

BREMERTON, WASHINGTON

Sailors walk and whistle,
girls with masks of makeup
parade the main street, like
play characters
Smells rise from the bay;
salty air,
sounds from the old
ferry moving along the water
like a snail
the bridge bends with
traffic from the navy yard
at five

· Brook Harvey, Bozeman High School

The huge swan
moved as slowly
as an old man
driving his new silver
truck
down the busy street,
being passed.

· Danelle Davis, Cardwell School

MONTANA

the cars whizzing by
heavy clouds
rolling by Laurel
a windpipe refinery
that lets off smoke
like grandpa smoking
his pipe
the sounds of the connecting
train trailers.

· Michael Beyl,
Graff Elementary, Laurel

One day I was walking over to my friend's house and I saw a black cat. A few minutes later my friend came running down the street and asked me if I wanted to help her find her cat. I asked her if it was a black one and she told me it was. So we went after it. It jumped over fences under fences and around houses and into a barn.

I told my friend that I was not going in. She pushed me so I pushed her back. She told me that she was going in. I was afraid but I went in anyway. I looked all around in that old dark barn. I picked up one piece of straw and then another but I could not find that cat. My friend said that the cat was on the roof of the barn. I told her I was not going up there but somehow she got me up there.

We got the cat but then she didn't know how to get down. She told me we could slide down and stop at this little place and then we could jump.

Well I slid down but I didn't stop and I fell and broke my arm.

· Cristi Sands, West Elementary School, Laurel

TOM THE MERCHANT

Tom was tall, heavily built, or a little overweight, and he was ugly. He had a big long nose that stuck out from a scarred face that was topped with messy brown hair. That's all you could see when you looked down on him in the coffin.

A villager told me Tom was a mean man and unfriendly too. He said Tom the Merchant was so unfriendly to the people in his village they started avoiding him and looked the other way when he came. Children ran when they saw him coming. And from everything that I had been told by the villagers, all they knew about his death was that it was a strange one.

Then I noticed a group of men that looked like his traders. I walked over to one of them and asked him how Tom had died. The way he died was truly strange and unusual.

The trader said, "Tom was a businessman and a gambler. He didn't gamble much, but when he did it was for a lot of money."

Another one of his men interrupted and said,"All day he sat behind his desk in his big house that was always untidy and dirty, and counted his money and looked for places he could make a big profit. He never did anything fun and he never smiled."

They all wanted to tell part of the story so one after another they either interrupted or took turns.

So another man, his entrepreneur, had not had a turn, so he continued the story. He said, "He never left and had us hired traders do all the work. Day after day he sat behind his desk and became more and more overweight and unfriendly."

The entrepreneur said, "One day I had come back from trading in a distant town where I heard of a company forming there and they needed investors. So after I gave him the money I had made I told him. His eyes widened and he wanted to know more. I told him I didn't know any more about it, so he decided to go to visit the town and the company. I don't know what happened when he went to see them, but he must have been satisfied with it because he invested all the money he had into it."

Then his speculator said, "The company had made very few profits the first months."

And his entrepreneur said, "Then one day he received a message from the company. I was in the room while he was reading it. He got halfway through it then he looked full of loss and fear. He put his hand to his chest as if there was pain. Then he slumped over in his chair dead."

After I had finished talking to his men I still did not feel sorry for him, even though he was a distant relative.

· Jonathan Hartman, E.F. Duvall Middle School, Deer Lodge

WORKSHOP SOUNDS

Grinding of a drill
Moan of an electric saw
A ring of a falling steel bar
Squeal of a bit going through a board like a pig.
Squirt of a hose cleanin' up.
A swish of the water moving
sawdust and workshop sounds

· Benjamin J. DeLeo, Cascade School

A MOTO-X RACE

The buzzing of Motorcycles is like a bee
in your ear.
Or your brother trying to tell you something
when you're reading.
Or a chainsaw cutting a thick log.
Or a bear that keeps coming at you, roaring.

· Chad Fossum,
Sweetgrass County High School,
Big Timber

CONFUSED

You don't know which fork of the road
to leave on.
Your brain goes back and forth
like windshield wipers.
Egg beaters are in your head
mashing up your brains.
Winter, when you don't get to ride
your black and white bike to school.

· Ms. Barger's 1st Grade, Arlee School

THE WONDER BOY

You are bored at home. You say to your dad and sister, "Let's go camping in Yellowstone National Park and go fishing in Yellowstone Lake." They say O.K. You are getting ready and say to yourself, "This will be really fun."

You tell your sister and dad, "Let's get going." They say, "Oh all right, let's go!!!" You're off to Yellowstone Lake. When you get there you rent a boat. You go out to the middle of the lake. You catch a lot of fish before it starts to rain and storm. You say to yourself, "We should have gone back when we saw black clouds." It starts to get bad. The wind is making the waves high. Suddenly the waves get so high they get in the boat. Your sister Betsy falls out and goes under the boat. You're terrified. You scream and say to your dad, "Get her out of there." Your dad dives in the water and gets her out from under the boat. But they're still in the water beside the boat. You pull them out of the water and into the boat. You start the engine up and go back to the shore but you almost wreck getting there. You're riding home and you say to your dad, "Now I'm scared of Yellowstone Lake."

· Josh Perrigo, West Elementary School, Laurel

AS I ENTER MY LIFE

Here I sit looking at
a blank screen,
listening to
the dull hum of the monitor,
the whisper of the disk drive.
I look deep in the screen
but nothing is happening.
I place my hands on the keys
and bring forth an action
or two, maybe even life,
a circuit or eprom.
I am its master now.
I control this manmade object
which I command.
As I enter my life,
the circuits buzz and
crack
then smoke.
See—life is complicated.

· Ken Maxwell, Poplar High School

DESTINATION: LOS ANGELES

As I wait at the train depot in a small town in Utah, I think about Los Angeles and Rudyard, Montana. I am half way to my dream, but out of money. No food or shelter, just a dream. My temporary home on a bench is starting to get uncomfortable. The waiting is unbearable. I want to reach Los Angeles more and more everytime I think about it. It is like a bundle of energy built up inside of me. I grab my hair with my head down ready to scream as loud as I can.

To be in Los Angeles, that's what I want. I want to go to the beach and smell the salty sea air. I want to go to the big city, see the people and the tall buildings. The feeling inside me of going out into night is eating at me. To go into the night, when the sky is calm, the air is warm and the city lights combine to form a glow of everlasting energy.

When I get there I will go to a high class hotel. My room will have a balcony overlooking the ocean. Here the sun reflects little crystals of sand with a pattern of waves that stretch out for miles. The ocean, white capping and vicious, falling over into the sun's rays as they blend together. Darkness falls.

This is the night. Everything is perfect. I leave the room, go out to the parking lot and get into my sleek fire-red convertible. Entering the freeway, I notice the traffic isn't too bad, mostly tourists and cruisers, like me.

Cruising down main street is fun, unlike Rudyard's cruise, where we go from the edge of town, which lies next to a wheat field with rusted old tractor parts, cruise three blocks, cross the bumpy railroad tracks, turn around at the highway and do it all over again. Here, we don't start at a certain spot where everyone else turns around. Here, we go by miles of flashing lights and signs, buildings, cars, people and hangouts. A pool room, a noisy arcade, or just the sidewalk. We hit all these places in nonstop continuous fun. That is what it's all about.

If only Rudyard could be like this. Sure there are people, the same ones I see everyday. The only buildings are an old grocery store, a movie theater, which is only open one day a week, a gas station, and a bar.

Pacing the dirty tile floor, I spot a quarter. Feeling a little relief, I quickly pick it up. I stick it

into the vending machine on the far wall. The old machine splatters out a hot cup of coffee. I wrap my cold fingers around the cup and feel a chill of warmth run through my body.

The rest of the night seems like the world is freezing around me. I sit in a trance on the bench, staring at a gumball machine across the room. I kick it over, shattering the silence. Glass and gumballs bounce until they run out of power and stop dead in their tracks, like me.

Dull yellow rays break through the dirty depot windows, awakening me. People slowly begin to invade the building. I notice the mess of gum was cleaned up, all but one piece of gum, a red one, my favorite color. It sits right in front of me. It seems to stare at me.

* * *

Throughout the day as people arrived and left, I was able to collect handouts totaling thirty-one dollars and thirty-six cents. None of those people stuck in my mind, except one, an old man with a cane with gold trim. He had a trenchcoat on with leather cuffs. He gave me a twenty dollar bill after everyone left. He sat next to me and told me his story of how he was once like me, poor but with a dream. Nothing could stop him. He made it, and said that I would also. As he left, he kicked the one red bum ball without noticing it. This was the second time he had done this. It seemed he gave it an extra boost, like he gave me.

I was thirteen dollars shy of getting a ticket to Los Angeles, and I was determined not to spend any money until I got the ticket, even though I'd only had two cups of coffee in the last two days.

The night came, and silence was once again upon me, but I felt the same rage as the night before. Pacing once again, over in the corner I saw a gun, or what looked like a real gun, black, shiny metal, but it was only a toy. In the garbage can was a ski mask with a hole on the top of it. Visions of Los Angeles once again invaded my mind. I had a wicked thought...Money...A gun...It all clicked together. The bank across the street caught my eye for the first time. I felt I had nothing to lose and everything to gain. I planned the one-man robbery.

As I pushed open the doors to leave the depot, I noticed three guys in raincoats walking up the bank steps. I stopped and watched them huddle. One guy drew a gun and entered the

bank. Without realizing it, I dropped a dime into the pay phone, dialed the police and told them what I saw.

As I was leaving the depot police cars came around the building. I pointed out the doors that the three robbers entered. The police chief waved me to get into his car quickly. They were going to wait until the robbers left the building. Just then a blue Sedan with a smashed in back bumper screeched to a halt and out came the three from the bank. They entered the car. The pursuit was on. The chief and I were in the lead. Flashing lights, screeching tires and loud sirens were behind us. Around the corner flew the blue get-away car, fishtailing into a telephone pole, and smashing off the rest of the back bumper.

The chief and his men arrested the robbers. Just when I didn't know what to feel, the chief turned to me and told me I was a hero. I was told I would receive a large reward for the good deed. I remembered my dream and knew it would finally come true.

After receiving the money I went to the train depot. I bought the ticket to Los Angeles at the counter and received the time schedule. As I turned around, the old man with the cane was sitting on the bench, just like yesterday. This time he was smiling with approval at me. I offered him his money back but he refused. So I offered to buy him a cup of coffee. As I turned away from the coffee machine with the two cups of coffee, I looked at the bench, and he was gone.

Then I noticed the red piece of gum on the floor. It was farther from the bench than it was that morning. I picked it up. It was warm and glowing in my hand. I put it in my pocket.

The train pulled up to the building. This is it, I thought as I boarded the train. The ride seemed to last forever, but we finally arrived in Los Angeles. When I left the train, I reached in my pocket and pulled out the red piece of gum. It looked a brighter red than before, and it seemed warmer. I stared at it, then I put it in my mouth and slowly chewed it. The flavor of success was what I tasted. I turned around. I saw the old man's gold trimmed cane on the floor beneath me. I picked it up and wondered where he had gone.

But this didn't seem to stick in my mind very long because I was thinking of what to do here in Los Angeles. I went to a car lot and saw a fire-red convertible sitting among several other new cars. On the hood sat the old man. He was smiling as I approached him. He said to always keep your mind clear and your thoughts pure and you will be successful in every-

thing you attempt. With that advice, he left, never to return. I decided to buy the convertible and go out on the town tonight and fulfill my destiny. I never will see the old man again, but he is always in my heart whenever I set my goals.

· Tim Messineo, Blue Sky High School, Rudyard

· Iliff McKay
Napi Elementary School, Browning

BUTTERFLIES

are the first letters of the wind,
fluttering, gliding, flying flowers, pollen-bodied, petal-winged. They spell rainbows and parrots and fruit and fish.

· Kim Morgan
Browning Middle School

BUTTERFLIES

They like sitting in lemon meringue buttercups,
eating honey-sweet nectar, fanning their wings.
If I were one, I'd pucker up

my spiral tongue and sing something,
a lullabye to my miniature caterpillar
while he's eating maple leaves and spinning

His silk-smooth cocoon the color
of pearls, cloud white, snow
on the red leaves. He hears his mother

humming her nursery rhyme to him, though
he's too busy falling asleep and changing,
a metamorphosis from fuzzy worm to

A bird with paper wings, a leaf flowing,
floating, soaring, flapping in a breeze,
a rainbow sunset stream, rising.

· Mrs. Walawander's 5th Grade, Arlee School

CATERPILLAR

wearing 18 boots
walking up the once
in a lifetime tree
he spins himself
into paradise
and dances away
in the wind.

· Lance Hull, Graff Elementary School, Laurel

· Sam Solway
Browning Middle School

THREE HAIKU

Small people of my
garden, girls doing the can
can dance, kick legs high!

· Jody Conant, Canyon Creek School, Billings

Comes like a silent
person walking on soft ground
A person afloat!

· Ted Kurkoski, Canyon Creek School, Billings

bees horrible bees
sting you and punish you, run
make up with honey

· Bill Keder, Lincoln School, Livingston

MOUSE IN HIS HOLE

His feet like pink leaves
scurry west of sleep.
His ears scan the sky
for airplanes —
black evil hawks
and their hooked beaks
and their grasping talons.
He squeaks and wakes
safe in his nest,
barley and wheat in his granary,
his tail like a minute rope.
Dizzy, exhilarated,
he chases it
around and
around.

· Group Poem,
7th and 8th Grade,
Cardwell School

PAINTINGS

An old-young artist scribbles with his brush. It's not his fault because a little kid in a paint-stained shirt bumped his scarcely twisting elbow. The blood-red paint shrieked over the yellow cloud of sail on the whale-blue sailboat.

It looked like the sun hit the sailboat's
fin with a crimson fist. It made a lightning fault
in the lemon sky of the sail. A whale shrieked
and dived, his gigantic tail splashed scarce

fish with white waves. The lantern fish scarcely
lit, dull like a sun covered by clouds. The sailboat
flows through oceans of paint and shriek
and roll, fish-quick and splashing, but it's no one's fault.

· Group Poem, 2nd Grade, Thompson Falls School

THE PORTRAIT

Jacob was very happy. He finally could fulfill his grandmother's wish.

Jacob's grandma had had this wish for as long as Jacob could draw. Nellie, his grandmother, wished for Jacob to paint a portrait of her.

When Jacob was in the third grade, people began noticing his drawings. Since that time he had taken private art lessons. It was at that time that his grandma had expressed her wish. Now, at the age of fifteen, Jacob felt ready to try.

He walked into his grandma's house. Under one arm were his easel, paints, and paint-brushes. Under the other arm were his paper and pencils. Around his neck was his instant camera. He began snapping pictures of his grandma.

"What are you doing?" asked Nellie.

"Taking pictures so I can use them to paint you," answered Jacob.

"No, no, I want you to paint me from real life, not by some picture," said Nellie.

"Are you sure?" asked Jacob.

"Quite," answered Nellie.

"It'll take a long time."

"Paint," was Nellie's only reply.

"O.K.," agreed Jacob. He set up his easel and painting equipment. He began to make a light sketch of her eyes. As he tried to mix the peculiar blue of her eyes, he began to feel a little uncomfortable under Nellie's kindly but penetrating stare. He decided to ignore it and continued painting her eyes. After he finished her eyes, he went on to her cheeks. When he tried to draw her cheeks in, he noticed that there was no color in them.

"Are you alright?" asked Jacob.

"Of course," said Nellie, a little out of breath.

"You don't look well," stated Jacob.

"Just paint!" snapped Nellie. Jacob resumed painting with a worried frown.

Jacob was sketching Nellie's eyes when Nellie began drooping forward in her chair. Jacob ran to her and noticed a deathly pallor on her face. He felt her wrist for a faint pulse. He helped Nellie lie down and ran to call the paramedics. They put Nellie on a stretcher, loaded her in an ambulance, and sped away in a whir of shrill sirens and flashing lights. About ten minutes later, the phone in Nellie's kitchen rang shrilly. Jacob, who had stayed there, ran to get it. A strange voice on the other end told him that Nellie had never made it to the hospital. Nellie was dead.

Jacob wandered disconsolately out into the living room. The first thing that he encountered was two eyes staring kindly at him. They were Nellie's eyes, painted in a portrait by him. He sat down in Nellie's chair and stared at the portrait. She had sat here not more than twenty minutes ago. Slowly tears began to well up in his eyes. Very soon he was crying with all his might.

"It's not fair! I need you! You can't leave me!" he cried incoherently.

He continued to cry until he was completely cried out. Then, he sat dejectedly, staring at his hands. He thought of his grandma. How she always baked him cookies and made him use correct table manners. He remembered the time when he was five and had come upstairs in an old suit of grandpa's. Grandma had tried to teach him to waltz. How they had laughed just thinking about it. Then Jacob knew what he wanted to do.

Jacob walked over to his portrait. He picked up a paintbrush and began to paint. He painted until he couldn't paint anymore. The portrait looked pretty good. He could always finish it tomorrow. He went softly out the door, shutting off the lights as he went.

· Susie Cotton, E.F. Duvall Middle School, Deer Lodge

THE FACTS OF LIFE

There was a hot dog named Helen. She lived with her brothers and sisters, Harry, Sue, Mary and Jack in the refrigerator.

When a human hand came and pulled out their friend, Pricilla Pickle, she never came back, and nobody knew what happened.

The next day, Helen asked Marge Mustard, "What ever happened to Pricilla Pickle?"

"Oh, I'm not very good at telling young foods about the facts of life! Go ask someone else."

Helen didn't know any other older foods to ask. She knew she shouldn't ask food she didn't know. Her mom had taught her that before she disappeared just like Priccilla Pickle. Oh, she had to find out what happened to them.

One day when she was thinking about her problem, a human hand, smaller than it was before, came and pulled her out!

She could not believe her eyes! A rather small looking human (perhaps he shrunk) looked at her. Helen could not tell if it was a male or female because she forgot what her mother told her. Helen thought, "I know it's something like a female is made of puppy dog tails. No wait! That was male. Oh, I don't have time to think about this."

Then, it stuck a long, pink thing out of its mouth. It touched Helen. Then it said, "Yuck." And put her back in the refrigerator.

Now Helen knew what happened to Pricilla Pickle and mom. She felt bad for them, but she felt good because she knew the facts of a food's life.

· Amy Smedsrud, Meadowlark School, Shelby

BACKYARD KEGS

I remember back in my
early years, before my brother
was born. About every weekend
in the hot summer my dad
and mom would stick a
whole pig in the ground to
roast. While the aroma
of fresh pork drifted through
the air, all in a daze like
the wind a hoard of people
would arrive at my house
and go straight to the keg
behind the old pine tree.
Here they would laugh and
trade stories, get drunk and
have fun. Sometimes even give
me a drink. Then eat the
pig. Those were fun times
at the backyard kegs.

· Scott Brenden,
Bozeman High School

in the wide field
horses trotting alone
faster and faster
moving freely
their tails blowing in wind
looking like flashes of lightning.

· Ann Moore, Graff Elementary School, Laurel

Down in the meadow
where the field mice meet,
the rabbit and the rats have races.
The pigeons and parrots have picnics.
Where the ducks and the deer divide dandelions.
The ants climb on the antelope
and the antelope chase anteaters.

· Lisa Flikkema, Monforton School, Bozeman

THE HAIRY ANT FARM

About a couple million years ago there was a very beautiful girl. She had long, long, hair which she wore pinned up on the top of her head.

One day she decided to go get a suntan. She got a towel and some suntan lotion and lay down in the grass for about an hour and a half. All of a sudden her head itched majorly. It quit itching after a while but started again after about five minutes. After that she went inside, but it still itched and didn't quit. By night she was going crazy so her rich uncle took her to the doctor. The doctor said she had something in her hair. Then he gave her a prescription which was to shave her head. The uncle didn't tell the girl that her hair had to be shaved off. That night the barber came and started to shave her head but stopped when he saw the ant farm. He was really confused so he asked the uncle what had happened. He said she had been suntanning and a bunch of ants crawled into her hair. The barber understood and finished his job. When the girl woke up she looked in the mirror and freaked. Her uncle told her what he had to do last night. She understood and always wore a bonnet. This incident is what made the invention of the lawn chair come to pass.

· Laurie Watt, Washington School, Miles City

AUCTIONEER

The auctioneer sings
out his tune

I am his voice
floating out over
the sweating heads

skipping off bald skin
and fluttering around
young ladies
who don't know
I'm there.

When the auction is over
I stop floating and
settle into the dust
that feet have
trampled smooth.

· Jody Dow, Outlook High School

Sitting on an old tree stump
watching thistles go by
high above, an eagle
flying in the sky
Out of nowhere
appears a whitetail
leaping smoothly over barbed wire

· Debbie Scott, Outlook High School

DOLPHIN

This food of a fish swimming
quietly along under the depths
of the still silent sea, but then
the dolphin strikes its prey
so softly that the fish dies
a fast, smooth death and the
dolphin isn't hungry any more.

· Brenda Paul, Thompson Falls School

SONORA KING SNAKE

I wish I was a silky, slimy
  Southern Sonora King Snake
If I were a Southern Sonora King Snake
  I would crawl through the slimed,
    slithery grass
The slimed, slithery grass would feel
  like wet pennies
    sliding up your arms

· Bryce Holmquist,
Lockwood Elementary School,
Billings

SWAN

I was sitting by a pond
and there I saw a lovely swan
all white and feathery.
I saw its big black beak
and its eyes shining in the
sunlight. It looked at me
with those big black eyes
and then it flew away.
It just got up and flew away,
that big beautiful swan.

· Chad Carlson, Big Timber School

THE DUCK

A duck is soft and furry
and brown and white.
In the pond
with fish and shaded land
shadow swimming warm in the pond.
And their wings are wet
in the pond.
They eat fish in the lake
good food
Gray sky fish.

· Amy Oswald, Thompson Falls School

PENGUINS

Penguins waddle like a painted turtle
all dressed up in a tuxedo, like a bartender.
Slides down a hill on its tummy like a
sled, it might ruin his tuxedo but
he'll just have to change!

· Danita Anderson, Granville Stuart School, Deer Lodge

A BUNCH OF BEARS AND A MONKEY

A bunch of miscellaneous
animals. There are bears and they are all perpendicular
to each other. It seems the monkey has an alibi.
She says the letter alpha
and the letter beta
have been kidnapped and harassed
by ugly melancholy
characters. "Of course, they hate being harrassed,"
she says. The bears hope beta
and alpha
have an alibi.
They also hope they are being hung perpendicular
to each other. But we know it's just a miscellaneous
lie.

· Rachel Ensign, Washington School, Livingston

SAM THE CAT: ALIAS LIFESAVER

Part One: First Encounter

He didn't know how it happened, but suddenly he was out in the street. Maybe it was when he tried to climb the curtain. Anyway he was out in the street with no home, no food, and no love.

He started walking down the street, but he stopped because he thought he heard his name.

"Sam, come home!"

He knew that voice. It was his master, the little boy Jake. He started to run back to the house. But Sam stopped. He thought he heard another voice.

"Jake, get in here. The cat isn't out there."

It was Mrs. Brown, Jake's mother. It was she who threw him out. He turned and ran into an alley. He ran headlong into a big tom cat, the one Jake called "Old Tom". He had seen this cat before. He was scared because he had watched this cat from the window. He had seen "Old Tom" attack any male cats that crossed his path. He started to back up. He bumped into a wall. The big tom cat growled, then he curled his upper lip into a snarl.

Sam mewed pitifully. He tried to get away. The tom cat yowled again and again. Sam mewed. Sam tried to tell the big tom cat that he would get out of his territory if Old Tom would just let him go.

The big tom cat felt threatened. He couldn't let this strange cat take over his territory. He knew what to do; he would teach this young cat a lesson.

He leaped. Sam leaped to get out of his way. Old Tom pinned Sam on the ground. He snarled a warning to Sam.

"If I catch you on my territory again I'll kill you! Got it!?"

Sam was so terrified he couldn't say anything. Old Tom ripped Sam's ear in half. "Got It?" he growled. He wanted to be sure Sam got the message. Sam agreed as he cowered on the ground beneath the old cat.

Finally Old Tom let him go. Sam beat it for home. He started scratching on the door of his home. The door opened, and he ran inside. Mrs. Brown gasped at the sight that presented itself. She called to the housekeeper to get her some gauze. Then they took care of his wounds.

He yowled when they put the peroxide on his ear. He struggled to get away, but they held him tightly. He finally stopped struggling. Too tired to meow, he fell asleep.

Part Two: A New Lesson

After that terrible experience Sam wasn't let out of the house for many nauseating days. He went wild trying to get out. Finally Mrs. Brown let him out. He ran to the back door and ate. When he finished eating, he walked a few feet away from his bowl and licked and wiped his face clean. After he cleaned himself, he took a nap. When he awoke, he stretched himself out to his full length. When he was fully awake, he noticed something by his dish. It was Old Tom. Sam became furious. Now Tom was in his territory! Sam got so mad he didn't know what he was doing. Suddenly he was crouching close to the ground, and then he was flying through the air at Old Tom He felt suspended for the few seconds he was in the air. The next thing he knew, he was fighting Old Tom. After a while Old Tom got free and ran for the alley. Suddenly Sam realized what he had done. He had stood up to Old Tom.

He returned to his bowl to eat some more. He stood still when he saw what he thought was the most beautiful female cat he had ever seen. He walked up to her and licked her cheek. She licked his cheek too! Sam went wild, that meant she liked him!

He ran around and around her. He climbed a tree, came back down and strutted over to her. She started to run; he ran after her. When he caught her, they play fought. After that he never saw her again, but he did become a father.

Part Three: Sam is Accepted by Mrs. Brown

Mrs. Brown always ignored Sam, but after one night, she never ignored his meow. Why? Because one night as Sam was prowling around he saw a spark. He became interested in it. He walked over. He had seen this before. It was the plug in. It had Mr. Brown's study light plugged into it along with a lot of other stuff. The spark became bigger and bigger. It started putting off fumes. He wanted out, so he ran down the hall to Mr. and Mrs. Brown's bedroom. He meowed and scratched on the door, even though he knew he shouldn't.

Mr. Brown opened the door and grabbed Sam by the scruff of the neck. When he came to the kitchen, he thought he smelled smoke. So he turned on the light.

"Jane, come here quick!" he said. Mrs. Brown came running down the hall, her robe billowing out behind her.

"John, what on earth?" said Mrs. Brown.
"Look!" he said.

"Oh, my God!" she screamed.

"Go get Jake. I'll call the fire department."

A while later they heard a siren.

"They're here." Jake said.

After the fire was put out, Sam thought he was the luckiest cat in the world. Because he had warned them of the fire, he received more attention than ever before.

"You're a hero, Sam!" cried Mrs. Brown. For the first time in his life she hugged him.

"Meow," said Sam, feeling very happy.

· Kristie Albers, Fort Benton School

FOOTBALL

is the first letter of summer.
It's a brown leather oval. It flies like a blimpy bird through the burning air. It sounds like a blizzard wind.

SOUNDS OF FOOTBALL

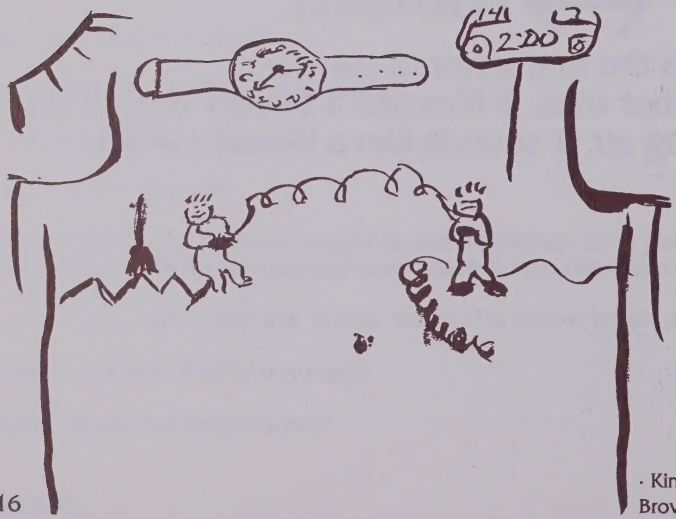
smack, crunch, bap, grunt,
ugh, ig, smush, bop, ouch,
Do you want to play?

· B.J. Young, East Side School,
Livingston

THE BOMBER

The ball is snapped and is
suddenly caught. The quarterback
sprints backwards, prancing, pondering,
poised. Running from side to side,
swaggering, swaying, sweeping, staggering.
Waiting, watching, hoping for an
open man. He spotted, sighted a
receiver deep in the end zone. The
ball is released. It slowly spins spirals
for the hands of the receiver. The
receiver spins and strains and catches
the ball, its a miraculous moment
in time. A touchdown!

· Brett Lloyd, Anderson School, Bozeman



· Kimberly Morceau
Browning Middle School

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RACE FOR HOPE

"Mom, could I go down to Mert's Drug Store for a minute?" Allen asked.

"No Allen. You're handicapped. I don't want you out in traffic by yourself. You might get hurt. Why don't you go out on the porch and play your new records?"

"I hate being in this wheelchair! I hate being handicapped! Why did this accident have to happen to me? I hate being alive!"

Allen went out onto the porch to sulk. He sure had a way of feeling sorry for himself and getting others to feel sorry for him too. He picked up his portable stereo and slammed it to the ground.

"You're handicapped. You can't play basketball," the boys said.

The next day Allen went out to get the mail. That was one of the things he could do. He looked at one of the cards. It said, "Road Race to be run." At the bottom "wheelchair entries" was written in bold print. He decided to run it.

Every day he practiced in the parking lot when his mom was at work. At first his arms got tired, but after awhile he got stronger.

Then on the day of the race, he snuck out of the house. He got there and started the race.

His mom noticed he was gone. She went out and got in the car to look for him. Then she saw him wheeling his wheelchair.

It turned out that he had won the wheelchair division.

After this his mom changed her mind about him. She would even let him go to Mert's Drug Store.

· Marcus Young, Fort Benton School

GRANDFATHER

He runs proudly
in the picture.
I see a reflection of myself
in an arched neck
a strong stride
stretching across the generations.
Through a twisted strand of genes
I received
his build.
Through a twisted string of letters
his picture.
He runs proudly.

He runs proudly
in the picture
Before me, now,
his veins beat blue ropes
across his hands and the
sanitary white sheets.
The filed fingernails clutch
wearily
at the life threads.
My mother's eyes grope at
mine,
tearing me away.
I sent him a poem, but
he doesn't know my name.
But in my picture,
He runs proudly.

· Molly Weaver, Bozeman High School

The skyward strides
of the pounding
pattering feet of the horse
fill the air.
The muscular miraculous
horse runs raving rambunctious feats
in their eyes.
The reins tighten, the track shortens.
The pounding pattering feet
of the thoroughbreds get louder.
They prance in the air toward
the finish line with fast fire
in their hearts.
Running, running, running
over the finish line.

· Hilary Korte,
Anderson School, Bozeman

waiting to be set
on the river of rage
I have fought with my raggish mother
I am a bull in fury
I am a raging fire
or a lit stick of dynamite waiting to explode

· Chayne Popelka, Sweetgrass County High School, Big Timber

THE BOXER

In the ring very Silent Stands the big,
Bulging Black man,
Dancing on his toes,
gracefully,
with his guns cocked,
and ready.
He gives Blows,
That hit with a blast,
and Suddenly you have,
a Black out.

· Russell L. Manweiler,
Laurel High School

POLE VAULTER

Hands tense gripping tight
Eyes staring fired on sight
Legs pulsing, prancing high
Momentum mounting to the sky
Pole lowers punching pit
Tendons tighten, closely knit
Feet kicked up in air
Pole pains much as dare
Body lifted with a thrust
Every muscle at its must
Pushing hard with a grunt
Slipping over just in front.

· Clayton Jarrett,
Sweetgrass County High School,
Big Timber

THE BATTER

Arms swung back over his shoulder.
Hanging onto a walnut stick that could smack
Saturn into centerfield
Eyes squint from the sun shining brightly over
the staduim's side. The slider is slung.
Smack. Spiraling, swaying, swirling over
centerfield right to second row
seats into laps of spectators at the
spring game. The Batter goes scribbling
speedily around the bases and scores to
the screams of spectators.

· Andy Jacobsen, Belgrade High School

THE SKIER

Slicing down the steep slope
Scrunching up almost scant
Testing the traverse
Trying not to teeter
Judging the jump
Jauntily justified

· Bill Heinecke, Belgrade High School

THE SWIMMER

The symmetrical strokes
of the strong arms of a swimmer
water splashes like a salt shaker spilling
water scatters as the legs move like scissors
the steady times of breathing
swimmers like seesaws
like sharks

· Dana Wrobetz, Belgrade High School

SLAMMING

The guard glides gracefully, effortlessly.
Skimming skyward, soaring, swaying.
Pumping, clutching, spinning.
Flamboyantly floating on air,
Exciting the crowd with his flair
Going to the hoop, finishing the break
with a rim rattling,
backboard shattering,
death-defying dunk.

· Kris Atteberry, Anderson School, Bozeman

DONE WITH BASKETBALL

I am sitting on the bus trying to get to sleep. We all have our own seats, but everyone is sprawled out trying to get comfortable. Danny and Ice are lying on the floor. I wouldn't lie down there if somebody paid me because it is so dirty. I peer up over the seat. We just passed Livingston so we still have about 300 miles until we get to Glendive. It's hard to believe that we have just won our second State Basketball Championship in a row. Glendive had won two in a row when I was younger, and that's what I had always wanted to do.

Dave is sleeping right across from me. I wonder how the team will be next year. Dave and Darren are only juniors this year so they'll be pretty good next year. Wait a minute. I'm a senior. I'm done with high school basketball forever. This is depressing. I don't know if I even want to think about this. I look up to see if anyone else is awake. Only Walt, the bus driver, and Coach Bos are awake. So I guess I'll just lie down and confront this problem.

Done with high school basketball. No more games at good old DCHS... no more practices... no more getting reamed by Coach Bos. I guess I won't miss getting reamed too much but I will miss everything else. No more having divisionals in the Metra or having our annual wrestling matches when we stay at the Warbonnet Inn... no more being packed on this bus with the JV and freshman teams. But wait... basketball was even more than this. No more having people who I didn't even know come up to me and say, "Good game" or "Good luck in your next game"... no more signing autographs for Steve McPherson's little brother... no more going out to eat with the Kiwanas and all the other groups around town after the season is over. From now on the only time I'll read my name in the paper is if I get a ticket or something. I wish I was still a junior. I can't believe I'm done. Usually I'm not a sentimental kind of guy, but this is starting to get to me. I guess this is what growing up is like. Growing up sucks.

I've learned a lot from basketball though—like it's more fun to win than to lose and that hard work will pay off in the long run. I think what I learned most was that you have to have confidence in yourself. I learned that if you don't believe in yourself no one else will. Maybe I just learned that now from writing this.

We're starting to slow down so I look up over the seat. We're pulling over to a rest area. It's a good thing because I wouldn't have made it to Billings.

I'm done with basketball, but hey, what a great way to finish.

· Cory Nissley, Dawson County High School, Glendive

↔

THE BULL

As the bull
jumped
out of

the chute
first his
front hooves

high above
his head hooves
kicking in the air

Off
the cowboy
goes
hard and fast.

· Ron Halverson, Big Timber School

COWBOY

In a midnight club
A cowboy sits and enjoys
a beer.

A fresh can of chew is pulled
from his pocket, he takes
a dip and spits on the floor.

Country music plays on the
tune box, while the man tilts
his hat and kicks his feet up
on the table.

When morning comes, the cowboy
finds himself sick in his
truck, wrapped in a wool
blanket.

· Bryan Crain, Outlook High School

MONTANA'S BARS

men telling stories
like wind howling through the trees

drinking beer and whiskey
talking to the trophies on the wall

a dusty old man walks in
like a tumbelweed in a wind storm

an old cowboy prays to the porcelain god
this is Montana

· Scott Wirtz, Outlook High School

A cowboy seesawing his rocker
Relaxing with a brown glass bottle
Staring into blackness
Hat tipped down shading his eyes
From the blinding sun
Petting his watered down setter.

· Pat Ulrickson, Outlook High School

THE SHEEPHERDER

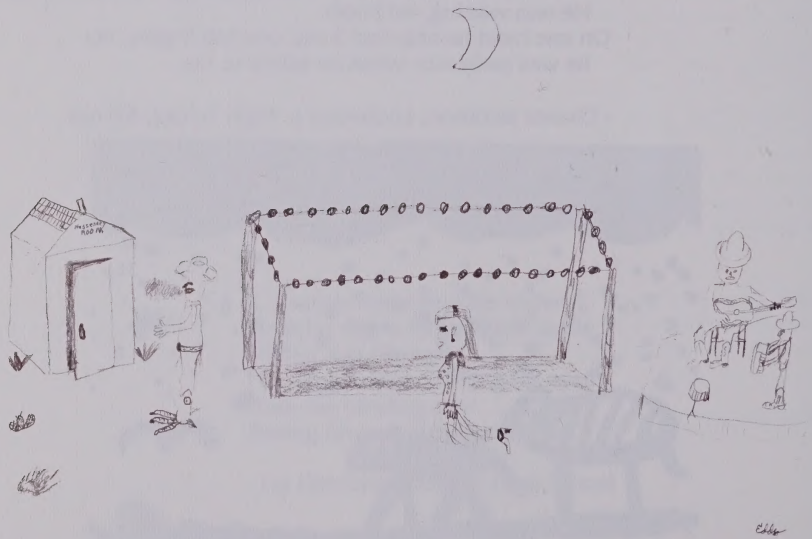
One day I was in
my uncle's store and
an old sheepherder came in.
He looked really mean,
mean as a mule with his tail on fire.
He had a piece of leather tied in his boot,
and six pieces tied through his ear.
A part of his other ear
had been bitten off in a fight.
He wore his hair in a Mohawk and had
a pony tail about a foot and a half long.
He had a ring through his nose. He was wearing
a sheepskin coat and tight leather pants.
He was wearing red boots.
On one hand he only had 3 and one half fingers, but
he was really nice when he talked to me.

· Chance Jacobson, Lockwood Jr. High School, Billings

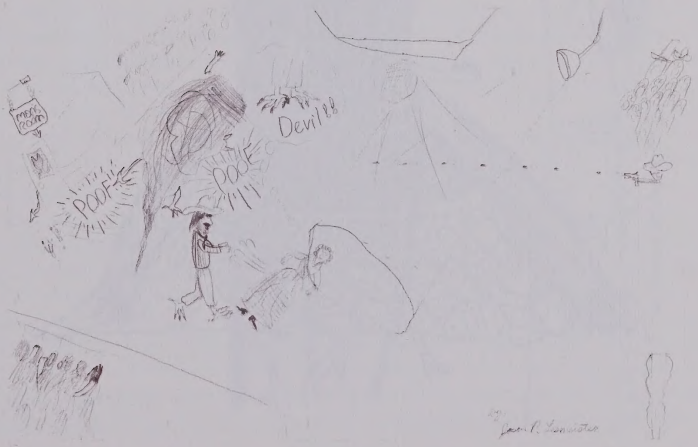
↔ · John Kingston, Napi Elementary School, Browning

▲ When visual artist Hills Snyder arrived in the classroom, he wrote the story below (from The Vanishing Hitchhiker—Urban Legends in the Making) on the chalkboard. He read the story several times aloud as the class began drawings that included more than one detail or event from the story. Using the full page, dealing with sounds, sights and smells, the following drawings nearly tell the story without words.

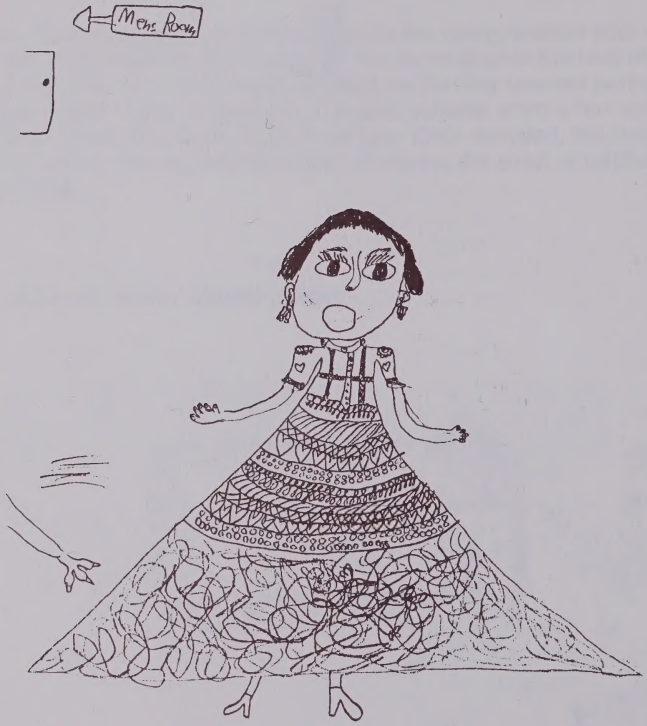
> Dressed as a dashing vaquero, [cowboy] he finds the young woman who is playing hardest to get, then steals her heart away on the dance floor to the beat of a polka. It is Love Story revisited—until the chosen lady notices that her talented partner has chicken's feet, a typical sign of the Devil. The poor señorita emits a few screams of "¡Sus Pies! ¡Sus Pies!" before she faints, But it is too late. Once revealed, the Devil disappears into the men's room, leaving behind a cloud of smoke, the smell of sulphur, and some great dance steps.

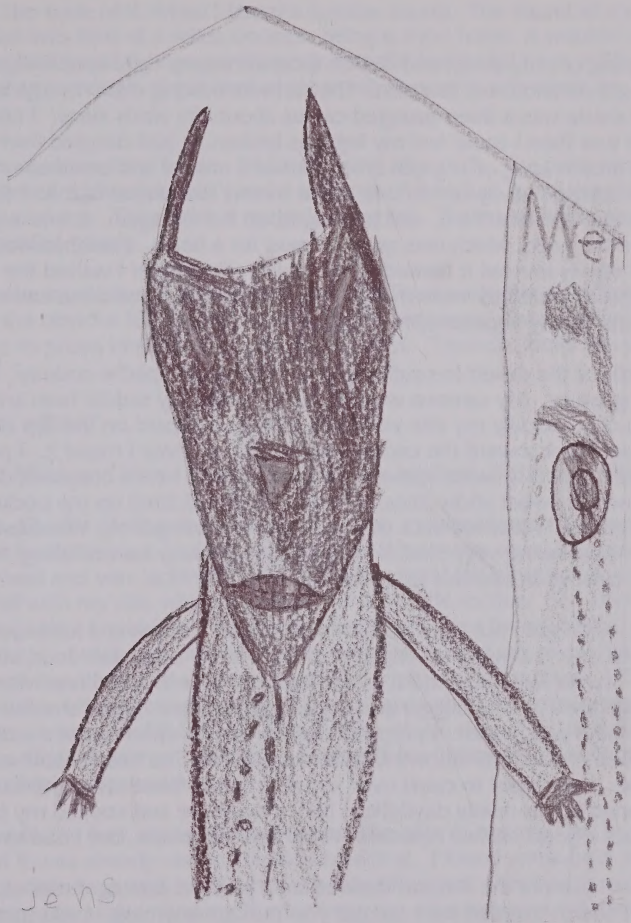


· Joshun, Lincoln School, Miles City



· Jason P. Lesmeister, Lincoln School, Miles City


Mens Room



↔ · Jens, Lincoln School, Miles City 129

MCQUADE

I could feel the sting of salty sweat and dirt on a cut above my right eyebrow. My shoulder felt like crushed gravel under my raw skin. The sun was beating down on me and the only thing around for shade was a three pronged cactus about fifty yards away. I tried to push myself up, and it was then I could feel my leg was broken. It just dangled from the middle of my shin like a broken twig off a green limb. I looked around and could see my mountain bred buckskin breathing heavily on his side about twenty feet ahead of me. I figured he had a broken leg. I threw a rock at him, and he lunged up but fell again. It was a gruesome break right above the knee, which was quite unusual for a horse. I reached down, unstrapped my colt and slowly leveled it towards him. I knew the longer I waited the more he would suffer. Already buzzards were trying to land on the exposed bone and meat of his leg. I took aim and slowly squeezed the trigger.

I was in the middle of the desert in southern New Mexico, in Apache country. I also knew I would be needing water. My canteen was still slung across my saddle horn and my horse was lying on top of it. Luckily my rifle was in its torn up scabbard on the top side. I pulled myself over the sandrock toward the cactus. After about an hour I made it. I pulled out my Arkansas toothpick, which is better known as a bowie knife, I cut a couple of chunks of cactus and drained the sweet sticky juice. I drank my fill and filled up my pockets with mushy pieces of cactus. I crawled back over to my horse and got my Winchester and extra cartridge belts. I was feeling very tired, so I rigged up a rickety lean-to using my horse and some rocks, and crawled inside and fell asleep.

When I awoke it was night , but I had no idea what time. There was a full moon and it was almost as bright as day. I saw something dart in front of my makeshift door, so I grabbed my Winchester. I could feel the smooth worn stock and little indentations where many a time my fingers gripped it. The trigger and trigger guard were rubbed smooth and shiny unlike the black barrel and breech. I propped myself on my elbows, saw a white streak and took a quick shot as I fell off my elbows and hit the ground. The dead rabbit was lying about 15 yards from me. I managed to crawl over and skin him without too much trouble. By the time he was skinned it was nearly daylight. I built a small fire and cooked my breakfast, knowing there was a good chance Apaches would see the smoke, but I had to eat.

After my breakfast I put out the fire and chewed on a piece of cactus. I sure wished I had some tobacco. It seems like that stuff can get you through anything. I was just sitting there

dreaming about the taste of it, when I heard a familiar sound. The sound of shod hooves striking rock. That was kind of a relief, because being a shod horse, it wouldn't be the Apaches. I thought it could be the guy's friends that I'd had to kill back in Silverado. They had come a hunting it though. I get kind of mean when people talk about my kin, especially my sister.

I pulled myself back around my horse. My broken leg hit a rock. The pain was tremendous, but I knew if I wanted to live I couldn't make a sound. It was just good shooting light when the riders came upon me. They were a rough looking lot. There was more meanness in them than a wounded grizzly.

I was going to have to shoot my way out of this one. There were three of them. The one in the middle was the obvious leader, but not the most dangerous. The rider on the left was young and eager to prove himself. I would get him first. "Howdo, looks like your needin' some assistance."

"Yeah I could use a little."

"My name is Jed Miller and these are my two younger brothers, Frank and Billy."

"Mine is Chance, Chance McQuade." All three of their mouths dropped at the same time as their hands went for their guns, but I already had my Winchester up. I had put a hole through Billy's chest and was jacking another shell in when I felt a tug at my shoulder. I got one more shot off with my rifle which hit Frank in the middle section. The cool blood trickled down my shoulder. I could no longer use my rifle so I went for my pistol. Jed charged his horse right at me. I waited calmly, knowing the horse would shy away from me because I was laying by my dead horse and horses don't like anything that is dead. When he did shy, he unseated the rider, not completely, but good enough to give me an easy shot. The bullet caught him underneath his left cheekbone. The whole side of his face was gone. I had never seen a 45 do that much damage. I guess them hollow point bullets I got back in Tucson do what they're supposed to.

I managed to get to my feet, trying to forget about the pain in my leg. Jed had only nicked my shoulder and it was already starting to stop bleeding. I found some beef jerky and biscuits in Jed's saddle bags and he also had a bottle of rotgut. I took a big swig then poured some on my shoulder. It stung like having your ass sand papered then dunked in

turpentine. I even found a little tobacco in Billy's shirt pocket. They had a total of $15 between the three of them. I grabbed a couple extra guns and cartridge belts and with some difficulty I made it onto Jed's horse, my leg was killing me from being moved too much and my shoulder began to ache. I headed west, hoping to hit Silverado by nightfall. When I came over the rise, the sun was sinking down behind me, leaving a reddish orange glow in the sky much like the color of a dance hall girl's hair in Gilman. I could see the door.....

· Bret Allen, Augusta High School

THE LEGEND OF THE MARLBORO MAN

He always wears a hat. He rides a horse. As he drives the cattle, sweat runs down his face
herds of crazy mustangs in muscular fury stampede across the open plains and by grass
and sage and scrub willow in agonizing dust.
He holds a cigarette between his cowboy lips. Rusty leather chaps shield his lanky legs from
rocks and cactus.
He saddles his roan horse, talks suavely in its feathery ear.
"Let's go get those broncs." Like one graceful centaur,
they fly, the horse's long neck stretched out like a mighty swan.
On his Herculean back the Marlboro Man
rides weightless as a cloud. Together they race
for the lead mare, a buckskin with a slender face.
They overtake her mad gallop and turn her toward the swift yellow river.
Stern and serious, the rider heads towards the ranch miraculously calm, he thinks of cold
water,
branches of cottonwood and soothing gray shade,
safe corral, comfortable bunkhouse, pink lemonade.

· Group Story, 7th/8th Grade Class, Cardwell School

I AM A MARINE

I am in a hole in the ground. I am a marine. I like to lift weights. I have to eat bugs in the Marine Corps. In the hole in the ground I make bombs. In the ground I feed off worms. I use a bazooka. I want to go back home, but a guy from Russia named Ivan, he has two partners from Mexico, they try to stop me from going back there. I try to get some partners. I got some partners. They helped me get back home. One of my partners asked me what I wanted to be when I got back home. I said, "I want to be a biker." He said, "Good. Now let's get this over with so you can go back home. So you can be a biker. Where are we going?" To my hole in the ground so we can make some more bombs so I can go back home. Is this what you're used to? Thanks, you guys, for helping me get back home. Good-bye.

· Ronny Hale, Basin School

WAR

War is the sound of bullets
ricocheting off Custer's bones
War smells like rotten eggs
from 1743
It tastes like yellow and brown
weeds
It looks like the sky
falling and never ending

· Tommy Dorsey,
Lockwood Elementary School,
Billings

HATE

Hate is an emotion that hurts you,
twisting a hot knife in your belly.
Makes you think of evil to do
against your enemy.
It guts you til you have nothing
left inside you, only yourself.
It psyches you up like a
volcanic eruption and you
fire away like an automatic
machine gun at a stranger's face.

· Billy Red Fox, Poplar High School

As I walked up that steep alley.
I saw a beautiful beetle.
It was minding its own business I should say.
There was a black cloud in my mind.
I was thirsty for evil, to kill, to hate.
I pulled out my mosquito spray
aiming for deceit to break the
commandment to murder, to kill.
Somehow it didn't seem that way to me.
The beetle crawled away from death
but soon discovered there was no way to shield itself.
He wiggled some and gave out his last kick, he was gone.
I had killed it needlessly.
My bones turned to Jello and I felt as if the wind could blow me away.
My cloud is not white.
It was gray and blue the colors of sadness.

· Deauna Doney, Lincoln School, Livingston

3/12/72

I got up at six a.m. and loaded the Citori. With my glasses, ear plugs, shells, and gun I took off to Medicine Hat with my family and Jay Whitaker for a money shoot. We stopped at the border check station where a border patrolman was rude to us while he checked through all of our stuff. Many hours after we got into Canada, we arrived at our motel and unloaded all the bags and went out to the trap club. There was still the handicap event left, where all the money was anyway, and I hoped to win it. My squad was a well organized, good shooting group. At the first trap we all got 25; then the heat was on. The morning shooters had just ended. There was a 98 shot, the top score of the day. Our squad got 75 straight. In the last trap the wind came up. Neither the guy next to me nor I had missed one pigeon. He missed the last target. I was right after him, and it was up to me. Because I was so nervous, I could hardly say "Pull". The target came screaming out. I swung and smoked it.

4/13/72

That morning I went to breakfast and I sort of snapped. All day I was just mad, almost insane. I would yell at people for no reason. Then I went out to the trap club and started shooting. I wasn't worth beans. I told everybody in my group that if I didn't shoot well I would throw my gun away. Everybody just laughed. At the last trap I couldn't do a thing right, so I found a big rock and busted the stock off the shotgun.

A guy I knew was on the phone as I went to throw my gun away. I don't even know where I am now but I think I'm in Canada—some motel in Calgary maybe. If I'm ever fortunate enough to get out of here, someday I may sit and laugh about this and tell the story to young children.

The help he had called for came at me with a straight jacket and locked me up for one month.

5/14/72

It all started coming back to me when I was in the holding pen. The first few days I was awake day and night for 48 hours. The doctors were doing tests on me in Canada to see if I were mentally ill. That week went by fast as I was in my own padded, windowless room The whole hospital has 100 rooms for people like me. Most of the patients didn't speak

English very well, but I translated most of it. In the middle of my stay, the doctors came in again to test me. They said I had improved very much and in 15 days they would test me. If I didn't have a relapse, which happens to many people, I could leave. This was great news. The other people all around me haven't gone yet, so I am a little nervous as the days are just flying by.

6/15/72

Today the doctor came in and tested me and walked me out to the holding pen. This was the first time I had been out of my room. I was blinded for a few seconds, and then I saw guards all over. The doctor explained they were needed in case anyone tried to escape. I sat in the holding pen 3 hours. A car pulled up, the door opened, and I climbed in. I was free—a free man again! Every day while I was in there, I could see the face of the man who was on the phone, the man who called the insane asylum. I will pay him a visit soon, sooner than he expects.

7/16/72

I got a motel room for the night. I looked his address up in the phone book. I knew his name from shooting trap. He lived on Fifth Avenue South and 13th Street North. That night I slept well, got up at six in the morning, and sat outside his house. I held the M16 with a 200 round clip I picked up on the black market. The only thing I had on my mind was to kill him. I broke into his house and waited for him to come back in with his morning paper. As he came into the house, I said, "Close the door," and he turned white. As I held the machine gun in my hands, I heard the police on the bull horn. I just pulled the trigger for about ten seconds, but as I shot him, I vowed I wouldn't be taken alive. I am going to bust out of this house, holding my gun in one hand and his bloody shirt in the other, shooting at everything.

· Dave Strissel, Blue Sky High School, Rudyard

Ode to John Coltrane

you are
the ginseng tea
the thirty-second note
a man
who courageously
expresses
imprisoned thoughts i
cover
with surrealistic imagery
and hand-copied
dotted rhythms

your language
entrances me
so
that i become
your velvet air
dancing
through the
curved chambers
of your
saxophone

but it is
you
who flows through
my hollow
veins
and circulates
sandpaper tones that
serenade
my feet

and it is
you
who offers
not iridescent
lullabies
but the improvisational
wisdom
of sweet potato pie

as i venture
inside of that which
describes you
i believe you are not
the buddha
or jesus
or a chocolate brown
holograph
or a mystic creator
but a man

and as i
kick
through
the tunnel
of confusion
you fill an
inner emptiness
and become a tangible
passenger car
that carries me
to an uplifted
country

· Sarah Vowell,
Bozeman High School

THE LAST WORD...

...is a very rare and precious word to have: One wants to use it well, to do it justice, to say something that will be remembered a little bit longer than other words. My last word is therefore a sort of prayer to you, the students and teachers and parents and friends and neighbors who are the readers of this book of very fine poems and stories. Dear readers, read this book—out loud—to each other. Read it more than once. Move your lips when you read, and let the words roll around on your tongue like gumdrops or bites of sour apple or the bits of eraser you chew off the tops of your pencils as you try to think of what to say next when YOU write. Listen out loud to the words as they fall out of your mouth, and hear wind and the whiz of a football and tears and laughter. Pick the words up in your hands and feel their different textures—rough, velvety, cracked, glassy. Hold them up to your nose and take a good sniff—it will be an odor of flowers and old tennis shoes and dinner cooking. Do this because these poems and stories are not finished until you read them in this way. It is up to you, you see, to complete them and give them life, up to you to do the magic that transforms them from little black marks on wide white paper into real and lovely things of this world. And, when you are through with this book—pick up another, and read it in exactly the same way. ▲

B.J. Buckley
Co-editor

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